Librarians Do it Quietly

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Librarians Do it Quietly

by slashyrogue

Summary

Adam doesn't expect to find a mate.

He's had very little experience and is content to just stay alone forever despite his ex-alpha still bothering him.

Then a new alpha shows up in the library.

And everything changes.

COMPLETE AND POSTING SPORATICALLY

Chapter 1

“She’s here again.”

Adam looked up from his lunch, frozen. “I don’t want to see her.”

Second Adam sat down at the table beside him and shook his head.

“Will’s taking care of it, Addie. Don’t worry.”

He felt himself shaking, upset setting in, and took a deep breath he let out slowly.

“I don’t understand why someone who broke up with me keeps coming back to talk to me.”

Second Adam smiled, setting his fast-food bag beside him. “Cuz you’re adorable, Darling, and she knows she won’t do better. Fuck her, alright? Just enjoy your food. There’s a good looking alpha out there, you know? A new one. Prime material for any one of us.”

Adam froze.

He didn’t like to think about alphas, or dating. His time with his last alpha girlfriend, Beth, who was out in the library now looking for him for whatever strange reason, made him not want to mate at all. His life was fine how it was, really, and it was much easier not to have to deal with all of that.

“I’m not interested.”

“Hmm,” Second Adam said, “Maybe I am then. I know even Lee’s been looking.”

Adam took a bite of his macaroni, frowning, and tried not to think about the new alpha. He'd been working at the library for years now, used to the constant rotating list of new people, but he stayed away from strange alphas.

It was much easier that way.

Whistling made him look up again as Lee came into the break room.

"He is…something," he said, heading for the refrigerator, "You know he's on the computer staring at news articles? I tried to offer help, but he was a bit grumpy. I'll try again later."

Second Adam laughed. "Is even the infamous Lee is losing his touch? I can't believe it."

Lee threw up his middle finger at Second Adam, grabbing a frozen dinner from the freezer, and went to put it into the microwave.

Adam didn't comment, already anxious, and finished his food. "Maybe he just doesn't want to be bothered by anyone. Not all alphas are looking for an omega to have sex with."

Lee and Second Adam looked at each other for a moment and then started to laugh.

"Oh Adam, sweetheart, you know that's not true. All alphas are looking for an omega to have sex with."

Adam blushed. "Will isn't."

Lee rolled his eyes. "Will's an exception, though we all know that mouthy omega Lecter has his sights on him."

Adam frowned. “I just don’t think…”

“Darling, if we’re upsetting you we won’t talk about such things. Alright?”

He looked away, holding his lunch bag. “Thank you.”

“Do you need a ride, Addie?” Lee asked, “I can…”

“Grigg is taking me home.”

“Alright. See you later.”

Adam nodded, turning to go, and headed out to the library again. He liked working here, more so every day, and the quiet was one of the main reasons. There was just something about being in a room full of people in silence that calmed him sometimes.

He turned to head for his desk when Grigg came out of nowhere, grabbing his arm.

“I sent her off,” he said, frowning, “She was…persistent.”

Adam blushed. “Thank you.”

“Maybe you need to get a restraining order or something.”

He shook his head. “It’s fine.”

“Alright, Adam.”

Adam pulled away, feeling oddly embarrassed, and went toward his desk in the computer area. The computer chairs were mostly empty, save for a teenage girl working hard at an online game, and one more person.

The minute he got close Adam smelled him.

Alpha.

He froze, the scent oddly strong, and the alpha turned to stare his way.

He really was very handsome, this alpha, and for some reason Adam wanted to get closer. The alpha seemed just as surprised as him, staring openly, and Adam shook himself rushing to his desk.

What was that feeling?

Adam had been around alphas often, his father was the main one until he died just two years prior, but never had the scent or sight of one affected him like this. He felt flustered, anxious, and confused all at once.

His hands shook as he struggled not to look at the alpha again and busied himself with checking the computer login times to be sure no one was on too long.

And that’s when he saw the alpha’s name for the first time.

Nigel Ibanescu.

The name made Adam's whole body feel tingly, almost like a song he'd always wanted to hear, and when he looked up to look at the alpha again he found Nigel watching him. Adam looked away, blushing more, and closed the login screen.

He had other work to do.

Adam began organizing the library interior files, trying not to look at Nigel, and got so caught up in everything he didn't notice someone was on the other side of his desk until he caught the scent. He looked up fast, shocked, and Nigel smiled.

"Hello, Mister…Raki, is it?"

He frowned. "Yes. Can I help you?"

"I was having trouble with the computer."

"It didn't look that way to me."

"Can you help me, Darling? I'm lost at all this…electronic shit."

Adam didn't move. "I think you're lying."

"What? I would…"

"I have work to do," he said, his voice shaking, "And I don't…I don't need people lying to get my attention. I don't like liars."

Nigel's eyes narrowed. "You're just going to ignore me?"

“Yes, please leave.”

He suddenly smiled. “Alright, Darling, I’ll go. For now.”

Adam watched him back away, the urge to inhale deeply hard to stop, and when Nigel sat down again another man came up to sit beside him out of nowhere. They got into a deep discussion, their whispers oddly rushed, and soon he logged out leaving without looking back.

He let out a breath, confused and a little disappointed.

It was rare for anyone to flirt with Adam, most alphas obviously knowing by the scent he gave off that he wasn’t interested. Beth had been a coincidence, sharing a building helped more than anything, and even with her he’d struggled.

But he’d never wanted to get close to her like had those brief moments with Nigel.

What did it mean?

Adam frowned, taking a deep breath and smelling the tiny remnants of Nigel’s scent in the air. It did things to him, his body a little warm, and he shook himself again.

No.

He wasn’t going to do this.

Adam went back to work, forcing himself not to think about Nigel. He finished his intakes, categorizing the newest from the oldest till he was asked by some teenager to help with the

login process. He helped, heading back, and went to put some books away since Roberto was off today.

He put away books, careful of anyone coming around, and the day went by much more calmly before Will closed the doors at nine. Adam came up to the main counter where Lee was sitting in Will's armchair half out the door and Grigg was leaning against it.

"Tell me again why I chose to work with the little monsters again?" Lee sighed, "It's exhausting, and the parents literally couldn't give two shits."

Grigg laughed. "Because you like them?"

He glared at Grigg. "You're supposed to lie to me, Griggy. We've talked about this."

Grigg shook his head. "I'll remember next time," he teased, looking at Adam, "How was your day?"

"Fine," Adam said, "Nothing bad happened, it was just a normal day."

Grigg and Lee looked at one another. "I saw that Alpha come to your desk, did he…?"

Adam blushed. "He lied about needing help and I sent him away; it was nothing important."

"I see."

Second Adam came out of the bathroom and groaned. "FINALLY, I CAN YELL IN HERE!"

They all laughed just as Will stuck his head out of the office. "I can hear you, you know."

“I wanted you to, Will,” Second Adam teased, “I’m trying out my alpha mating calls. I see it worked.”

Will rolled his eyes. “Are you all just gonna stand around? I’m sure there’s still books to put away or…something.”

Lee got up, kicking Will’s chair. “I did *all* my work, Dad,” he said, “Can I go home now?”

“Hey, I was just…”

“We’re finished, Will,” Grigg said, “I’m gonna drive Adam home and I have tomorrow off so I’ll see you all on Monday?”

Second Adam threw his arm around Grigg. “You’re not gonna have a drink with us? Really, Grigg? Us poor bloody omegas need our time together, you know?”

Grigg shook his head. “I’m heading to my sister’s tomorrow, I can’t. Sorry guys.”

They all sighed, and Adam couldn’t help but be secretly happy. He did enjoy spending time with his coworkers, who had become more than that the past few years, but today had been harder on him than he was letting them know. He needed to be alone tonight.

“I…I’m tired,” he lied, “I’ll see you all tomorrow.”

“Alright, Addie,” Second Adam said, patting his shoulder, “You can tell me all about your time with the hot Alpha tomorrow.”

“It wasn’t…”

“Leave him alone, now,” Lee teased, grabbing Second Adam around the arm, “You know that bitch ruined him for other alphas, it’s gonna take time.”

Second Adam frowned. “Sorry, Adam.”

He blushed harder, squeezing his fists together.

His time with Beth had affected him, yes, but he didn’t think it was that bad. Right? He’d never been with anyone other than her, never trusted anyone, but it didn’t mean he’d be alone forever.

“It’s fine, I…I need to get home, Grigg.”

Grigg grabbed his lunch bag and came up to him fast. “Alright, that’s my cue. Goodnight, guys.”

“Have a good vacation, Griggy!” Lee yelled, “Tell the sisters I love them!”

“I will!”

They walked out together, and Adam let out a long breath when they got outside. He shivered, and Grigg put a hand on his shoulder. “Are you ok, Adam?”

He shook his head. “I’m fine.”

“Hey, you can tell me if there’s anything wrong. Okay?”

Adam shook his head. “I just want to get home.”

“Alright.”

They headed for Grigg’s car in silence, the moment gone, and the ride was just as quiet. Adam liked riding home with Grigg, but he enjoyed his own car better. It was still being fixed until tomorrow, and he needed to ask someone for a ride to pick it up after work.

Hopefully it won't be a problem.

The street outside his apartment was oddly empty when they pulled up, and Adam hesitated before getting out.

“Have a good vacation, Grigg,” he said, “I will see you on Monday.”

Grigg frowned. “Thank you. Are you sure you’re ok? Nothing happened with that alpha, did it?”

Adam shook his head. “No, nothing. I’ll be fine.”

“Do you need me to walk you inside? I know she still lives in your building and everything so…”

“No, I’m fine. Thank you. Goodnight.”

Adam got out fast, eager to be alone, and rushed to his door. He all but ran inside, heading for his apartment, and looked behind him wondering if Beth would come out of nowhere but she didn’t.

He locked up after, setting everything down, and felt strange still as he headed for the shower.

It was almost like a heat but not, a warmth spreading, but he wasn't due a heat for weeks.

No, it wouldn't be that.

He showered, leaning against the tile, and thoughts of Nigel crept in as he washed himself. The alpha's scent rushed back like a forgotten memory, affecting him more than it had in person, and he could feel slick drip down his backside.

"No," he sighed, "No, it's…"

Adam ignored the warmth, finishing fast, and left the bathroom to dress down for dinner.

He refused to think about Nigel at all, watching his programs, and when dinner was done he pulled out a book to keep his mind off of it.

It all but worked for an hour until someone knocked at his door.

Adam froze, staring, and knew it was Beth.

He didn't move, not at all, and instantly the thoughts he kept hidden came out again. Thoughts of Nigel were an odd comfort, his body heating up, as he heard Beth call out.

"Adam, I know you're in there! I just want to talk."

Adam bit his lip as the warmth spread, and he knew without a doubt that he was in heat. He got up, shaking, and ran for his bedroom, barricading the door. His clothes he threw off fast,

so hot even the remnants of water didn't help, and he grabbed his phone.

Adam: I'm in heat. I won't be coming to work tomorrow but I need to pick up my car. Can someone pick up my car?

Grigg: Are you ok, Adam?

Adam: I need someone to pckp…

Second Adam: I can pick up your car, Addie. It's alright. I'll bring snacks, yes?

Adam: tttttt

He dropped his phone, biting back a whimper, and nearly threw his bedside table drawer to the ground getting out his artificial knot. The minute he pressed it inside him he cried out, and soon everything was a haze until someone was wiping off his forehead the next day.

Second Adam stared down at him frowning. "You poor thing, you have such a shit knot. I brought you one, it's much bigger and better. Here, Darling."

Adam sighed as Second Adam handed him a box. "Is it new?"

He laughed. "Yes, Adam, it's new. You think I would share my toys?"

"It hurts, it…"

He wiped off Adam's forehead. "I know, Darling, I know. I got you some macaroni I put in the fridge from the place Grigg says you liked, and he gave me the keys till he comes home. Alright?"

Adam blinked back tears. "Alpha…I need my alpha."

Second Adam frowned. "Darling, you don't have an alpha."

Adam felt tears fall down his cheeks.

No, he didn't.

But why did it feel like he did?

He grabbed the knot Adam gave, and shoved it inside him, making Adam get up off his bed.

"I'll leave you to it, but I'll be back. Alright?"

Adam barely heard him, the new knot so much better, and soon he was lost in another haze.

He barely remembered the next three days, and when it was finally over he was more exhausted than he'd ever been after a heat. It felt like he hadn't been satisfied at all.

Adam came out to find Grigg making dinner.

"There you are."

He frowned.

"What day is it?"

"Tuesday," Grigg said, stirring, "You've been at it for a while. Adam said you barely knew he was here."

He sighed, pulling his robe closed, and sat down at the table.

“I don’t remember.”

“I know. Adam….I know you don’t want me to ask but…”

Adam frowned. “It was a spontaneous heat, I’ve never had one before and I don’t know why.”

Grigg frowned. “You’re sure?”

“Yes,” he lied, “I’m sure.”

There was no need to tell Grigg the truth because it wasn’t like Nigel was important, and maybe he really did need to start dating again. That had to be it.

Grigg gave him his dinner and he ate, feeling still so worn out he could barely keep his eyes open.

“Will says you don’t need to come in tomorrow, if you’re not ready.”

“I have work tomorrow, I’m fine.”

“I know, but…”

Adam blushed. “I’m fine.”

He was fine.

He was.

“You know, that alpha that was there on Thursday? The new one? He asked about you today.”

Adam’s head shot up and his eyes widened. “He did?”

Grigg smiled. “Yes, and he left you something. I’ve got it in my bag, hold on.”

Adam’s heart skipped a beat, as Grigg headed for his bag by the door. He pulled something out, a small box, and came over to Adam handing it to him.

“I know you’re not really into alphas after…her…but I think maybe he likes you.”

“I…I’m not interested in that.”

“I know, Adam but…”

“I think I want to be alone,” Adam said, setting the box down, “Please?”

Grigg sighed. “Alright, Adam. Your car is downstairs, alright? All fixed.”

“Thank you,” he said.

Grigg patted his shoulder. “You’re welcome. Goodnight, Adam.”

He watched Grigg go, eager to open the box, and the minute the door closed he did just that and frowned.

A single tip of a rose was inside, just obviously picked, and when Adam brought it to his nose he felt warm all over.

“Alpha.”

It was a strange gift for sure, and yet it felt like the best he’d ever gotten.

And yet he wanted nothing to do with Nigel.

Nothing at all.

Chapter 2

Adam left for work early the next morning, eager to get back into his routine, and pulled into the parking lot just as Will did the same. He parked, got out, and Will met him halfway to the door.

“You’re here,” he said, “I didn’t think…”

“I’m on the schedule today,” Adam said, “So I came to work.”

“Adam, you just got done with your heat, it’s fine if you stay home.”

Will reached out to touch him and Adam recoiled, oddly upset at him being so close. “No, I’m…I’m just fine. Please let me inside.”

“Alright,” Will said, frowning as he turned away for the door.

Adam stayed far back, looking around at every sound that passed but no one was there.

“Adam?”

He turned his head so fast he felt a little dizzy, running up to the open door where Will stood holding it open. “I’m sorry, I…I thought I heard something.”

“Are you sure you’re—?”

Adam raced toward the break room with his lunch, ignoring him, and turned on the lights as he went. He put his lunch bag away and found a water bottle drinking fast. His heat was over,

he knew it was, but after days away it felt strange to return to the library.

He took several breaths as he sat down at the table, calming a little, and was about to get up when he heard footsteps. Adam gripped the water bottle hard, bracing himself, and was instantly relieved to see it wasn't Will.

"You look like hell."

Roberto Bellini, their page who worked only during his college breaks, stood in the doorway looking Adam over. Adam had never liked him very much but Roberto was never mean to him either.

Adam stood up, blushing, as Roberto came into the room.

"I'm fine."

He heard Roberto scoff as he passed, opening the refrigerator, and tossing in his bag.

"I know what it's like to be fresh off a heat, Adam," he said, frowning, "You could've stayed home, you know?"

Adam shook his head. "I needed to come to work."

"Suit yourself, I'll be pushing around my stupid cart all day but if you need to leave…I can take over."

He blinked. "I…thank you."

Roberto nodded, heading over to start the coffee pot. “It’s nothing,” he said, “Not like it’s that hard anyway.”

Adam felt a bit of a dig at that, turning to leave fast, and hardly paid any attention until he nearly slammed into someone else.

“Hey, hey!” Second Adam said, grabbing his shoulders, “What the hell are you doing here, Darling? Last I left you were using that wonderful *knot* I gave you.”

Adam blushed harder. “I have to work,” he repeated, getting upset as he pulled away from Second Adam, “I *need* to be at work.”

“Are you alright, Addie?” he asked, frowning.

“Why does everyone keep asking me that? I’m fine!”

Second Adam let him go with a sigh.

“Forget I asked then,” he mumbled, passing Adam by fast.

He squeezed his hands at his sides, clutching his bag, and practically ran to his desk to be away from everyone else. Adam sat down, pulling out his things: a book to read at lunch, his laptop, and when he opened the book there was something else.

Nigel’s rose.

It was smashed a little, but he hadn’t figured out how else to keep it other than drying, and when he touched the petals he felt calmer.

Adam sniffled, smiling as he closed his book, and turned on his computer.

"Adam?"

He jumped, startled, and saw Grigg standing on the other side of his desk.

"You should announce yourself to people," he mumbled, looking away, "I didn't hear you, and I don't like surprises, you know that."

"You usually hear everything," Grigg said, "And pay attention to everything. Are you ok today? Second Adam and Roberto said…"

"I'm fine!" he said, maybe a bit too loudly, "I'm just…I'm tired."

He felt strange when Grigg leaned down closer to him, his fingers nearly touching the book that Nigel's rose contained. Adam snatched it back so hard the book fell, and he fought tears leaning down to get it off the floor.

"Adam, hey, hey," Grigg said, coming to help him pick it up only for Adam to push him away.

Grigg frowned as Adam held the book close to his chest. "I'm staying," he said, "I *need* to be at work today."

Grigg nodded. "Ok, I'll just…let you work then."

"Thank you."

Adam held the book as Grigg left, looking back at him a few times but not stopping, and when he was alone again he relaxed. He readied himself for the day: checking the login

system and even getting up to turn on the machines. No one bothered him, thankfully, and by the time they opened the doors he felt better.

Though he couldn't stop looking at the doors every time someone new walked inside, and being both relieved and disappointed at who arrived. He kept telling himself he didn't want an alpha, didn't need one, and yet the further the day went he wasn't sure that was true.

Why was this random strange alpha affecting him so much?

He'd dated Beth for months and never been so desperate to see her, but this one random alpha he couldn't get out of his mind.

Adam forced himself not to look at who came in till lunch, putting up his 'AWAY FROM DESK' sign to head for the break room. He passed by the front desk but didn't look at anyone, hoping no one else was having lunch at this hour, but froze when he saw Lee.

Lee looked up from his salad, watching as Adam made his macaroni, and said nothing until Adam sat down at the opposite table.

"You look terrible. Was it a rough one?"

Adam frowned, not looking at him. "No, it…it was just…normal."

"That's not what I heard," he said, "Grigg and Adam both said you were pretty out of it, which isn't very like you. I remember during your last heat you worked from home in between. Heats don't usually…"

Adam slammed his hand on the table. "It was fine!" he said, his voice shaking, "I don't know why so many people keep thinking I'm not ok. I'm just fine! I…"

Tears stung his eyes as he looked away and recoiled when Lee sat down beside him. He pulled Adam into a side hug, and Adam closed his eyes tight. "Talk to me, Adam. What's

going on?"

He let out a long breath and shook his head. "I don't…I don't know."

"I think you might. Omegas *always* know, sweetie. I know I'm broken now but—"

Adam sniffled. "You're not broken, you…it wasn't your fault what happened."

Lee scoffed. "Yes, well…I'm still not quite right so…let me live vicariously through you. Ok?"

He looked at his food. "I don't…I don't want an alpha."

"Everyone wants an alpha, Adam, even if it's just for knots."

Adam moved away from his arm, picking up the fork again to take a bite. "I don't…I didn't…I never could make Beth think I was enough and I don't…"

"Adam…"

"I don't want to spend my entire life trying to be something I'm not and staying away from alphas…seems best."

"Not Will, though?"

Adam shook his head. "Will doesn't count."

Lee patted his hand on the table. "Is this about the hot alpha from the other day? The one who kept bothering you?"

He pulled his hand back and blushed. “No.”

“Adam…”

“I’m not…it’s not.”

Lee sighed. “Then you won’t mind if I have a go at him? He really was somethin’, you know. I caught him outside having a cigarette earlier and…”

Adam turned fast, eyes wide. “He was here?”

Lee blinked. “You didn’t know? He came by earlier and Will shooed him off before he came inside.”

Adam stood up fast, suddenly angry. “Why did he do that?”

“I don’t…”

He got up, throwing his food away, and practically ran down the hall turning to Will’s office behind the front desk. “Adam?” Grigg asked, “What…”

Adam ignored Grigg and walked into Will’s office without knocking. Will looked up, surprised, and he closed the door slowly. “Adam, what is it?”

He turned to glare at him. “Lee said you sent Nigel away?”

Will looked confused. “Nigel?”

“The…the alpha, the…he was here before and we…you sent him away?” he said loudly, “Why did you do that? Why…”

“He was bothering you, wasn’t he? Grigg said he left gifts and was harassing you. I was just…”

Adam shook his head. “Don’t do that again, don’t…don’t. I…I thought…”

Will reached out to touch him and Adam stepped back.

“Adam, are you alright?”

“No,” he said, “I…I don’t think I am.”

“If you need to go home, or if you need someone to drive you, I’ll let them off early?”

Adam sat in the chair across from Will’s desk. “No.”

“The alpha, did he…I…did you *want* him to come inside?”

The words made Adam blush, and he didn’t say anything.

“I won’t interfere again unless you ask, alright?”

He nodded.

“But with Beth, your ex, is…you want her out right?”

“I don’t know, I can’t just stop people from coming into the public library.”

“If they’re bothering you, you can.”

Adam stood up, feeling a bit better, and shook his head. “I’ll be fine, I…thank you, Will.”

“You’re welcome.”

He left without another word and headed for his desk, only to be stopped by some younger little boy at the computers. Adam helped him search for the next few minutes till he found what he needed and was ready to head for the desk when a scent caught him by surprise. He turned just as Nigel sat down, and blushed before he ran back to his desk.

The last few days hadn’t made Nigel any less attractive, though his eyes looked a little more bloodshot. Adam sat down, sneaking glances, and not once did Nigel look his way.

Which was oddly more upsetting than it should have been.

He caught himself openly staring after a while, slick forming at his backside, and he wiggled in his seat. Nigel’s scent wasn’t close enough here but he was starting to remember it, which was very strange.

“Adam!”

Adam nearly fell off his chair as Second Adam hissed his name from the other side of his desk in a whisper. “I don’t…please don’t do that.”

“You were completely lost, Darling, just…staring at that sexy alpha. He looks a bit rumpled today though, but it still works I think. Like one of those dangerous types you know you shouldn’t want but can’t help yourself?”

Adam blushed. “I wasn’t staring.”

“Sure, Addie, sure.”

“Why are you here?”

He put a paper in front of Adam.

OMEGA NIGHT

All omegas drink for free!

“You want to join us or are you sneaking off again?”

Adam frowned. “I don’t sneak off.”

“You do, Addie, but still…are you coming or not?”

He frowned at the paper. “I…I guess I will.”

Second Adam patted his shoulder. “Good man,” he said, “Lee says he can drive us home, or pick us all up I’m not sure. It would probably be best to just leave our cars here since it’s so close but…”

Adam looked at Nigel again, hardly listening, and was surprised when Nigel looked at him.

He didn’t smile, much to Adam’s confusion, and then looked away again.

Did Nigel not like him?

He’d seemed to like him before, and with the rose…was it not a gift of intent?

“Adam, are you listening?”

“What?”

Second Adam sighed. “It’s alright, Darling, I was prattling on a bit I get it. I’m just happy you’re coming along. That stupid bint you were with made you stay away, and we need our bonding time. You know?”

Adam forced himself to smile. “I…I know. I missed you all too.”

Second Adam kissed him on the cheek. “I’ll see you later, love. Try not to stare too much, it’s best to keep ‘em guessing. Yes?”

Adam blushed, pushing him off, and Second Adam giggled as he walked away. He turned to look at Nigel again, and saw him openly glaring. The anger made Adam’s chest hurt, and he had to turn away.

What had he done wrong?

Why was Nigel mad at him?

He looked up again when a loud bang echoed across the library, and Nigel stalked off having slammed in his chair. Adam didn’t even see him log out in the sessions, and tried not to be upset as he left the library.

Adam got up to log him out, hurt more than he should be, and paused when he saw what Nigel had been searching.

Omega gifts.

He was torn between being happy and being upset at the search, logging out.

Was Nigel looking for him?

Or someone else?

Adam dragged himself back to his desk and sat down, lost in his thoughts.

He'd never been very good with figuring people out, and now this felt harder than ever. Adam opened his book to see the rose, touching the petals, and the calm that came over him was very strange.

"Alpha…" he whispered.

Even if Nigel didn't want him, maybe this…was the start of him being ready for another alpha again. The thought of the alpha not being Nigel made his stomach hurt but he pushed it down, still touching the petals, and let the calm overtake him.

Maybe he did want an alpha after all.

Chapter 3

Omega Night was, in Adam's opinion, more trouble than it was worth.

Yes, you got free drinks.

Yes, there were more omegas than alphas in the bar.

But, the giant sign outside that read OMEGA NIGHT meant that alphas knew there were plenty of omegas inside to bother. Adam knew he should've said no to coming, especially after how he'd been around even Will earlier, but his heat had made him realize how much he'd missed being around Grigg, Lee, and Second Adam.

If only the alphas didn't keep taking them away.

Adam watched Lee and Second Adam from across the bar, frowning, while Grigg tried to talk to him about work. The two omegas were at such ease with themselves around alphas he was kind of jealous. Adam was twenty six, nearly twenty seven, and he still found most alphas hard to be near even working with one daily.

"...and then…Adam? Adam, are you listening?"

He looked at Grigg sharply, and blushed. "No, I wasn't listening."

Grigg sighed. "Are we gonna talk about what's going on or are you still gonna shut everyone out?"

Adam gripped his drink, the same sweet bottle he'd been working for almost an hour now.

“Grigg,” he started, staring down at the table, “Do you remember…how Beth and I got together?”

Grigg didn’t say anything for a minute, and then lifted his drink up to take a long sip.

“A little,” he said, “You live in the same building, so you just…got together.”

Adam picked at the bottle’s label, biting his lip. “She talked to me,” he said, his voice shaking, “All the time she talked to me and I…I wasn’t scared. My father had just died and I was all alone so I wasn’t sure about alphas but she…she was there.”

“Adam….”

He looked up. “We had sex,” he said, “But I…I never…she never knotted, and I thought it was because she wanted to wait till we mated but…”

Grigg gripped his hand. “Adam, knots…are not everything,” he said, leaning in close, “I’ve never felt they’re important, ok? You’re still starting out, and you have all the time in the world to figure out what you want. Knot or not, the right person will do what you want.”

Adam picked at the label as he felt a tear fall down his cheek. “I like how Nigel smells,” he said, so quietly he was sure Grigg couldn’t hear.

Grigg patted his arm. “And that’s ok too, right? I mean, alphas smell good. We’re supposed to like them.”

He didn’t say anything else, confused more than anything.

The two of them sat at the bar for the next hour, Lee and Second Adam coming and going but it was mostly them. Adam liked Grigg, he liked him alot, but he knew he couldn’t stay much longer.

“I think I’m going to go home,” he said, leaning in close, “I have work tomorrow.”

“So do I!” Grigg said, almost yelling over a sudden burst of music, “But I’m still sticking around. You never know who might show up. You sure you don’t want to dance?”

Adam shook his head, putting a ten on the bar, and stood up only for Grigg to touch his shoulder.

“You want me to walk you to the car? There’s A LOT of alphas around, it might not be safe.”

He shook his head, and pulled out his keys where a can of pepper spray hung. “”I’m ok!”

“If you’re sure…”

Adam got up, nodding,and began to walk off pushing through the crowd that only seemed to get bigger. He was overwhelmed by the sudden scents of alphas all around, and even recoiled when some hands touched him in places he didn’t want. The door finally was in front of him and he pushed it to get out, taking a breath before he headed for his car.

“Hey there,” someone said, seemingly out of nowhere, “You lookin’ for some fun?”

He turned, frowning, and a rather large blonde haired man came out from the alley.

“I…I’m going home, I don’t want fun. Please leave me alone.”

The alpha grinned, stepping closer, and Adam rushed forward holding up his mace only for the man to grab his wrist. He cried out, kicking, and was about to scream when someone grabbed the man from behind.

Adam's eyes widened when he saw Nigel twist the blonde's arm behind him, the loud crack making him oddly happy, and the alpha cursed falling to the pavement.

"He said NO asshole!"

The alpha got up fast, running from them, and Nigel turned to Adam.

"Are you alright, Darling?" he asked, looking Adam over as he frowned but didn't touch.

Adam nodded, not sure what to say, and Nigel glared back at the alpha who was still running from them. He looked at Adam again, his concern obvious, and Adam found he liked it a little too much.

"I'll walk you to your car and come back to deal with that asshole."

"He might be long gone then," Adam said, frowning, "And you don't have to walk me anywhere."

Nigel grinned. "I want to, Darling, I don't need your permission."

Adam frowned. "Oh."

"Come on now, let's get you safe."

"I'm fine, I…"

“That asshole almost dragged you off, Gorgeous, you’re not fine.”

“I don’t like nicknames,” Adam said, blushing as they started to walk, “And I had pepper spray. I…”

“Pepper spray is nothing to assholes like that, and your boyfriend in there should’ve come with you.”

“Boyfriend?” he asked, stopping, “What boyfriend?”

Nigel scowled. “The one with the curls who kissed you in the library.”

He blinked. “Adam? He’s not my boyfriend, he just kisses everyone. I don’t have a boyfriend, or anyone.”

Adam’s heart skipped a beat when Nigel smiled. “Ah,” he said, “Well then, I suppose that means you’re…open to seeing someone?”

Adam blushed. “I’m not sure.”

Nigel nodded. “I get that, Darling, it’s…complicated.”

“What is?”

Nigel gestured all round him. “All of it,” he laughed, “It’s all fucking complicated. Omegas and alphas, betas, all that.”

“Yes.”

“But,” he said, putting his hands behind his back, starting to walk as Adam did the same, “It’s always good to keep your options open.”

He held out another flower, this one yellow, and Adam blushed, taking it immediately.

“I don’t normally like flowers.”

“No?” he asked, “What do you like, Darling?”

“My name is Adam,” he said, looking down at the flower, “Not Darling.”

“Adam,” Nigel said, and Adam’s backside felt wetter just hearing his name from Nigel’s lips, “I’m…”

“Nigel,” he said, looking up, “I know.”

“Have you been looking into me, Adam?”

“I saw the name on the sign on page.”

“That could be anyone’s.”

He shook his head, smelling the flower. “No, it’s yours. I know it’s yours.”

“Do you?”

They stopped at Adam’s car, and he turned to look at Nigel. “Yes.”

Nigel made no move to touch him, and Adam almost wished he did. He could smell him so strong but it still didn't feel like enough.

"You didn't answer me, Adam," he said, "What do you like?"

Adam looked up. "The sky."

He heard Nigel's intake breath, and hurriedly looked back down covering his neck. Omegas showing their necks to alphas was a sign of being open to courting, and even Adam wasn't sure he was yet.

"I…I have to go."

"Star," he said, backing up as Adam opened his door, "Is that one alright?"

"One what?"

"Nickname, Darling. Can I call you Star?"

"I…I don't know."

Nigel pulled out a cigarette and put it in his mouth. "Not yet, Adam," he said, winking, "Not yet."

Adam got into his car and locked the door, to watch Nigel go. He lit his cigarette and took a long drag, and Adam stared at his neck as he looked up at the sky.

"Alpha."

Things seemed to be happening so fast, and yet not fast enough. He lifted the flower in his hand up to his nose and breathed in deeply.

Flowers had never been something he liked, or even enjoyed, but now he had two.

Two gifts from Nigel.

Were they gifts?

Or were they just flowers?

He started the car, more confused than ever, and pulled out of the parking lot with a thousand things going through his mind.

Beth had given him gifts too: star toys and books that she wanted him to read. He'd read every single one of them, even the ones he didn't like, and kept the toys until she'd broken up with him what felt like a lifetime ago.

Nigel was nothing like Beth.

Was that a good or bad thing?

He pulled up to his building and got out with the flower in his hand. It was just late enough for him to be tired and not too late that he was afraid. The alpha at the bar had been frightening, but Nigel's appearance made it hard to remember why.

Adam unlocked his door, suddenly thinking of Nigel again as he smiled, and he was about to go in when he heard familiar footsteps.

“Beth, please leave me alone.”

“Adam…”

He stepped inside, closing the door and locking it tight.

Beth had been the one to break up with him, and even he knew he should stay away from her. Why wouldn’t she just stop?

He ignored the knocking at his door and went right to his bedroom to put the flower in the same book he kept the other. Adam touched them and let out a sigh, then realized it was a purr. He covered his mouth in surprise.

He’d never purred before.

Adam stared at the book, half closed now, and considered throwing it away. This weird feeling around Nigel was almost too much too soon.

He wasn’t ready.

Adam instead rushed from the bedroom and went right to his shower, taking off his clothes in a rush before going under lukewarm spray. He sighed, trying to wash tonight off of him, and closed his eyes, getting lost in the warmth as it came.

Then he thought of how he’d blushed around Nigel, and how it felt to hear Nigel say his name.

Adam leaned against the tile wall with a sigh, and stuck two fingers in his backside moving them slowly. He bit his lip, whimpering as he imagined Nigel’s hand, and a loud purr seemed to vibrate off the walls as he stroked himself.

“Alpha…”

Nigel’s voice was in his ear, and his purrs grew louder at the thought.

“Come for me, Star.”

Adam came with a shout, spilling against the tile walls, and stared mesmerized at how sudden his desire came.

“Nigel.”

Maybe he did need to talk to someone after all.

Chapter 4

Adam thought all week about who he'd feel the most comfortable talking to about Nigel, and despite how close he was with Grigg he knew it wasn't him. Grigg was an optimist, despite having a terrible track record when it came to dating, and Adam didn't need that right now.

So he picked the one person who wouldn't sugar coat things for him.

He and Will had never been very close in the years he'd worked at the library, but the alpha never spoke down to him, or made him feel like anything less than an equal. So, as Adam pulled up to the building early the following week he was glad when Will pulled alongside him only moments later.

They both got out at once, and to say Will was confused to see him there was an understatement.

"Adam, you're an hour early. Is everything alright?"

Adam nodded, suddenly feeling anxious as he came around his car. "Can we talk inside? I don't want to have this conversation out where people can hear."

Will blinked. "What…what conversation are we having?"

He walked over to the door, ignoring him, and Will fumbled with opening the door twice before he let Adam inside. Adam turned on the lights as he went, and Will locked the door behind them.

"Adam, is something wrong?"

"I think we need to talk in your office, it's…it's more professional."

Will frowned. “Adam,” he reached for Adam’s arm, “What is this about? Are you…you’re not…you’re not quitting, are you? Is that woman bothering you *that* much? You can get a restraining order, I know a guy at the precinct, his name is…”

Adam shook his head and walked past Will all the way to the office sitting down. He’d thought long and hard about this, weighing his options, and Will was the very best person to talk to about this.

He heard the door close and turned as Will sat down looking more upset than he should.

Adam frowned. “I’m not—”

Will put his head in his hands and sighed. “Ok,” he said, running his hands up through his hair, “I can offer you a dollar more an hour. I know it’s not…it’s not *much* ,” he said, “But I…”

“I’m not quitting,” Adam said, “But I would like more money, if you’re offering it.”

He blinked. “Wait, you’re…you’re not?”

Adam shook his head. “No, I’m not. I came to talk to you about a problem I’m having.”

Will frowned again. “A problem?”

“Nigel,” Adam said, “I…I’m very confused because I don’t like alphas and I…I’ve been having sexual fantasies about Nigel since he first came into the library. He’s very handsome, and I…I’m unsure if…I don’t like alphas, Will.”

Will blushed, shaking his head. “Adam, maybe you need to talk to one of the others about this stuff. I don’t…you know I don’t date.”

“I know, but…”

“Adam,” he said, reaching for Adam’s hand on the desk, “You’re a good looking guy, and you’ve had a shit time with your ex alpha. Not all alphas are like that, you know, but this one…he’s a little…”

Adam frowned. “What?”

Will sighed. “He might not exactly be your type.”

“My type?”

He rubbed his eyes, sighing again. “I’m not…I’m not saying that Nigel isn’t…”

Adam stood up angrily. “I’m not a child, Will,” he said, “I…I can pick whoever I want to have sexual relations with, you know.”

“Sex?” Will asked, “Adam, you don’t even…”

“I’m sorry I bothered you,” he said, feeling angrier than he ever had before, “I won’t ask you anything private like this again. Have a good day.”

“Adam, wait! I just…”

Adam went to his desk, feeling very defensive, and pulled out Nigel’s gifts. It was an odd thing to be comforted by, he knew, but just seeing them made Adam smile.

“Adam.”

He didn't look up, not even a little. "I don't want to talk to you anymore, Will."

"I came to say I'm sorry," Will said, "I shouldn't judge anyone I don't know. You're right. I just…I want you to have the best, you know that. I want all of you to…"

Adam looked up. "What about you?"

He blinked. "What about me?"

"You deserve to have good things as well, and that includes having sexual relations with the omega doctor who is so rude to you."

Will got flustered, blushing. "He…he's not…we're not talking about me."

"I know that," Adam said, "But you do, Will. Everyone deserves a chance at being happy."

Will looked away. "I…thanks I guess."

"You're welcome. I'm not mad anymore, but I don't think I'll ask you about relationships again."

"That's probably a good idea."

"Please leave me to work, Will, and…don't forget to give me that dollar on my next check."

Will laughed, shaking his head. "I…I won't."

Adam nodded, booting up his computer, and didn't bother watching Will leave. He began to check on sign ups for the computer class he was doing this weekend, his first ever, and his heart skipped a beat when he saw Nigel was among the students.

Was Nigel going to pretend he didn't understand computers again?

Adam didn't like liars, not at all, but the idea of spending time with Nigel even in a room full of people wasn't a bad one. He felt a little flustered, moving on, and hardly noticed when the others came inside the library.

"Hey there!"

He jumped when Grigg put a hand on his shoulder. "You…you scared me."

"I'm sorry I…are you ok?"

"I'm fine."

"You forgot to text when you got home from the bar, I just wanted to be sure you were good. Nothing happened, right?"

Adam chewed on his lip, unsure of what he should say.

"Nothing happened," he lied, his stomach twisting, "I went home and went to bed."

"Ok, I just…"

The sound of children laughing made them both look as people came in, and Adam grabbed some papers off his desk. "I have work to do, Grigg."

“Ok, Adam. I’ll leave you to that.”

“Thank you.”

Adam watched him go, feeling bad for lying, and for the next few hours it only got worse. He hated liars, always had, and Grigg was his friend.

Why had he lied to him?

He closed his desk for lunch, hoping no one was in the break room, and was surprised to see Roberto the only one around.

“Hello.”

Roberto nodded, chewing on a french fry as he scrolled his phone. Adam put his macaroni frozen dinner in the microwave, looking at Roberto a few times, and when he went to sit the silence was wrong somehow.

“Do you have sexual fantasies about alphas?”

Roberto looked up. “That’s…odd lunch talk.”

“I shouldn’t have asked,” Adam sighed, taking a bite, “I just…”

“All the damn time,” Roberto interrupted, smiling, “Especially the older ones at school. Teachers, bartenders, all that.”

Adam frowned. “You’re…young to be into alphas so much older than you, and how are you getting into bars?”

He leaned back in his chair. “I’m nineteen,” Roberto said, “Not a kid anymore.”

“I know, but—”

“And fake IDs are a thing, Adam.”

“That’s illegal.”

Roberto grinned. “So are a lot of things,” he laughed, picking up another fry, “But I still do them. Why are you asking me anyway?”

“Will said not to ask him.”

Roberto laughed. “Ah, that’s probably a good idea. But…are *you* having…that?”

Adam blushed. “Yes.”

“Good ones?”

“Yes, I think so.”

“About the new alpha? The…the one who smokes and does like super shady deals?”

He frowned. “Shady? He…he talks to people sometimes.”

“Yeah, shady people. Second Adam thinks he’s a dealer.”

Adam’s stomach clenched. “You shouldn’t assume things about people you don’t know.”

“I guess. I just…I thought you’d want someone more clean cut. Like…I dunno…like a doctor or something.”

Adam took another bite of his food. “I’m unsure if I want an alpha at all.”

“I think you probably do,” he said, “Unless you’re just horny. Post heat stuff maybe.”

He frowned. “Maybe.”

They didn’t say anything after that and Roberto left first which gave Adam time to think again.

Was he just attracted to Nigel and wanted sex?

He’d never felt like this before, but the idea of being with Nigel made him very aroused. Adam wiggled in his seat, feeling slick forming, and when he heard voices got up fast to see Second Adam with Lee.

They both paused.

“You ok, Addie?”

He blushed, grabbing his garbage. “Yes, I’m…I need to go back to work.”

“Ok, just let us know if you’re not ok.”

Adam ignored them, feeling warm again, and headed for his desk only to pause.

“Nigel.”

He saw Nigel’s profile from halfway across the library but he knew it was him, licking his lips as he slowed down closer to the computer area. Nigel turned when he got close, eyes on him the entire time Adam walked to his desk. He felt wet again, wiggling, and was ready to distract himself when he saw a small box near his keyboard with a tag on it. Adam smiled and read the tag.

To Star.

Adam looked up and saw Nigel smiling at him.

He blushed harder as he opened the box. There was a metal star inside, flatly pressed silver that he could tell was recycled, and when he put it up to the light it shined.

“Oh.”

Adam went to look at Nigel again and saw him still staring. He looked away, tucking the star back in the box, and stuffed it into his desk to go back to work. There was no time to think about this now.

He went to check the inventory of the new magazines just as someone coughed making him look up.

“Beth, I don’t want to talk to you.”

Beth was wearing a hooded sweatshirt over her head like she wanted to not be seen, and the tears in her eyes made him feel bad. “Adam, I just…”

“Beth, I’m at work. I have work to do, and you coming here—”

Someone grabbed her arm, turning her, and he was relieved to see it was Second Adam. “C’mon Darling, time to go.”

“But—”

He dragged her away, and Adam was happy she didn’t fight.

Adam sighed and went to sneak a look at Nigel again but found him talking to someone. The two mens’ hands went under the table, like they were passing something, and he frowned.

Was Nigel a drug dealer?

It wasn’t exactly legal, or the right thing to do, but as he watched they both got up to leave though Nigel turned back to smile at him one more time. Adam’s heart skipped a beat, and his confusion worsened.

Should he try to stay away from Nigel if he was doing illegal things?

Could he stay away from Nigel at all?

He sighed and forced himself to go back to work. An email popped up and he clicked it.

To: araki@library.com

From: wgraham@library.com

Subject: Raise

I've added the dollar to your pay this week.

Though you do know I'm owed a few years for this.

Adam frowned.

To: wgraham@library.com

From: araki@library.com

Re: Raise

It was your idea.

Thank you.

Adam closed the email, feeling better, and went to check if any new students were coming to his class. He blinked when he saw Nigel's name was gone.

Had he decided not to come?

Adam felt oddly rejected, tears filling his eyes, and he closed his computer fast.

Maybe he was busy.

That was all.

He got up, trying not to cry, and went to the bathroom to sit alone.

Why did it bother him so much?

Adam rubbed his eyes, trying to calm down, and was close to bursting into tears when he heard something.

A moan.

Then another moan.

He pressed his ear to the stall, his backside suddenly wet, and heard a familiar voice.

“Quiet down now,” Second Adam whispered, “Someone might hear you, love.”

“God you’re so fucking hot.”

“I know,” Second Adam said, “I know. Now…shut it.”

Adam got up, flustered, and left the bathroom to walk to Will’s office. He knocked and Will looked up.

“Is something wrong?”

“Adam is having sex in the bathroom again.”

Will groaned. “AGAIN? That’s the second time this week!”

“It’s unsanitary at best, and rude at worst. We could get upset patrons.”

He got up from his desk with a sigh. “I’m on it. Just…go back to work.”

Adam nodded and headed off to check the magazine section for reorders.

He had other more important things to think about than Nigel, sex, or alphas.

Today had been confusing but really he should focus on work at work. That was exactly what he was going to do from now on. He went to the magazines, checking for rips or tears, but his thoughts went back to the gift in his desk.

Had Nigel made it himself?

Adam felt immensely happy at the idea, then instantly upset because Nigel wasn’t coming to class anymore.

This was why he didn’t like alphas.

This.

Alphas were so confusing.

If he was smart, he wouldn't think about Nigel ever again.

Chapter 5

Nigel didn't come back to the library for the rest of the week.

Not that Adam was paying attention.

No.

He was very busy planning his computer class, and as the day arrived he now had twenty students.

All Alphas.

Adam sat in the back eating lunch the day of class, frustrated as he tried to mouth the words to his Actor's Studio episode. He'd seen this one many times, and knew it by heart just like the rest but he kept missing words which did nothing to curb his anxiety.

"Adam?"

He looked over and saw he wasn't alone.

"I'm eating lunch, Lee."

Lee frowned. "Yeah, you are, but…you look like you're about to explode. You ok?"

He nodded. "I'm fine."

"You don't look fine."

“I’m fine, Lee, and I would really appreciate it if you didn’t interrupt me. I’m trying to watch my show.”

Lee was quiet after that, and though Adam stumbled on a few lines he was able to finish shutting his laptop with a loud click. He looked up and Lee was still there, still watching, and Adam took a sip of his drink looking away.

“I don’t like it when people stare at me.”

“I know, Addie. I know.”

He squeezed his hands together tight and let out a long breath.

“I…I don’t want to do my computer class alone.”

Lee was quiet, and Adam looked over to see his frown. “I saw the list,” he said, “All Alphas, huh?”

“Yes.”

“And no…very good looking shady types anymore.”

Adam blushed. “I don’t know what you mean.”

“Adam…”

“Lee, I would very much appreciate it if you could listen to me and not…I don’t like the idea of sitting there alone with them. I…I know there are other classes going on - Second Adam’s

calligraphy class and Roberto with the video games but…I…"

Lee got up from his chair and came to sit across from Adam with a smile on his face.

"You want me to come?"

Adam blinked. "You?"

Lee frowned and he laughed a little looking away. "Or *anyone* really, I just thought you might want company. I'm not completely geeking out like you and Grigg but I know my way around a document. I've made plenty of presentations for the little kids, you know, and…"

Adam opened his laptop, and pulled up the presentation he'd made turning to show him.

"You can read this, and I'll…I will try to do one on ones if they need help."

Lee smiled. "That sounds good, Adam."

Adam smiled, starting the presentation. "It's a standard class, mostly word documents and slideshow making. I expected it to be full of older alphas and omegas but somehow it's all younger alphas I'm not sure why."

Lee grinned. "Me neither, Addie," he said, patting Adam's hand, "What time do we start? Six? Seven?"

"I'd like to be sure everything's set out and ready by six thirty."

"I'll be here."

Adam felt much better as he nodded, finishing his food, and left to go back to his desk. He hardly was paying much attention, calm for what felt like the first time in days, and would've missed Nigel if he hadn't turned to look toward periodicals.

Nigel and another man were talking, almost arguing, and Adam frowned when the man slammed Nigel's hand on the table. Nigel glared at him, lip curling, and the man got up to leave while Nigel stared after him seething.

Adam found it hard not to look away, lost in the sight of him again after what felt like so long, and when Nigel saw him the wide eyed look he gave made Adam's stomach hurt. He stood up so quickly the chair wobbled, and disappeared into the stacks. Adam couldn't help but rush over to find him. He was shaking when he went down the first, not seeing Nigel at all, and then the second his chest hurting worse just as he saw someone rush by quickly.

He couldn't find it in himself to run after him, confused as Nigel went out the door, and leaned against the stacks with tears in his eyes.

"Adam?"

Adam sniffled as he saw Grigg come up from his left. "I…I didn't see you."

"Why are you crying? What happened?"

"I'm not, I was just…I…"

Grigg let go of the cart he'd been pushing and came up to pull Adam away from sight. He hugged him and Adam crumbled. "Adam, talk to me."

"Nigel was here."

"And?"

“He ran away, and I don’t…I don’t know why.”

He sighed. “Adam, maybe this thing with Nigel isn’t a good idea.”

Adam sniffled, wiping his eyes as he pulled back. “What?”

“It’s only been like two weeks and he’s confusing the hell out of you. I don’t like seeing you this way, none of us do.”

“I’m not a baby, Grigg, I can…I can deal with things just fine.”

“I know, but—”

He wiped his eyes. “Nigel isn’t the boss of me and neither are you. I need to get back to work.”

“Ok, Adam but I really do think—”

Adam ignored him, rushing away to his desk where he all but hid behind the screen for the rest of the day. He didn’t stop to talk to anyone, not even Lee who he knew would be staying behind, and when Second Adam and Grigg were gone he finally relaxed.

“Hey.”

He looked over and saw Lee frowning at him. “Hello.”

“We got an hour to kill,” he said, “You want to go get some dinner with me and Roberto? It’s just around the corner.”

“No, I’m fine. I…I have my frozen meals.”

“Ok, we’ll be back. Don’t let Will lock us out.”

“I won’t.”

Adam waited for them to go, getting up to find dinner only to see Will already eating at the furthest table. He looked tired, a little too tired maybe, and Adam couldn’t help but glance his way a few times while he microwaved his mac and cheese.

“I’m fine, Adam. Quit looking at me like I’m dying.”

He blushed. “I wasn’t.”

“You were,” he sighed, rubbing his eyes, “I just…I think I might be…I might be sick or something.”

Adam frowned. “Then why did you come to work?”

Will smiled at him. “You think I would leave a library full of omegas all alone?”

He shook his head as the microwave beeped and took out his food to sit. “We’re not helpless, Will.”

“I didn’t say that, I just—”

Adam pulled out his laptop, starting up his video, and didn’t look at Will again.

“You should go home,” he said, “Especially if you’re getting close to a rut.”

Will scoffed. “I’m *not* gonna have a rut, Adam, that’s…that’s ridiculous.”

Adam shrugged. “Most single alphas don’t get sick, especially if they’re as antisocial as you are, so it might be a rut.”

“Adam, I’m not a fifteen year old kid! I’m thirty five years old!”

He ignored him, taking another bite, and he heard Will mumble under his breath.

“..and his stupid smirk, those stupid red brown eyes and his stupid…”

Adam looked up a little, seeing Will chew on his sandwich, and his foot was tapping loudly. He’d never seen an alpha go into a rut before, not ever, but felt like Will was showing the signs of one.

“It’s dangerous,” he said, “To be with a library full of omegas if you’re gonna rut.”

Will growled, standing up fast, and threw his paper plate against the wall. “IT’S NOT A FUCKING RUT!”

Adam froze, eyes wide, and he didn’t know what to do.

Would Will hurt him?

He didn’t think so.

“You’re scaring me, Will,” he said, his voice shaking as he put down his fork, “I…I think you need to leave.”

Will let out a low growl, covering his face with his hands as he groaned. “FUCK! Fuck, I’m…I’m sorry, Adam. I…I don’t know what that was. I’m sorry.”

Adam didn’t move. “Please go home, Will.”

He nodded, packing up his food, and Adam flinched as he walked past him. The loss of his scent made Adam relax, and just when he thought he was alone voices made him jump.

“What’s gotten up Will’s ass, huh?” Roberto joked, coming in with several bags, “He looked like he was gonna cry.”

Adam didn’t move, barely breathed, and Roberto’s face fell. “Adam?”

He let out a long breath, a tear falling down his face. “I…I don’t think I can do computer class today.”

Roberto leaned over to touch him and he flinched, standing up fast.

“Hey, hey,” Roberto said, “Are you ok? You’re scaring me, Adam.”

Lee’s laughter from the hall made them both turn to look at the door before he came inside.

“Where’s Will off to? What…what’s wrong?”

Adam shook his head, bagging up his food as he tossed it in the garbage, and he nearly ran past them before Lee pulled him in for a hug.

"No, no, no! LET ME GO!"

"Adam, STOP! What the hell is going on?"

He didn't know what to do, or say, but he just laid his head on Lee's shoulder as tears fell down his face. Lee rubbed his back, and he hugged him till his heart stopped beating so fast.

"I think Will did something to him."

"What?" Lee said, "Will wouldn't, he…Adam?"

Adam sniffled, wiping his face, and he shook his head. "I…I got scared, that was all. Will, he…he yelled at me. I don't like it when people yell at me."

They both frowned. "Why the hell would Will yell at you?"

Adam sniffled again. "I…I told him I thought he was going into a rut and he got upset."

Both of their eyes widened. "The fuck?" Lee snarled, "Why the hell…the stupid idiot. It's fucking dangerous for him to…what the hell is wrong with him?"

"He didn't mean to do it, and it's not common for older alphas I under…stand."

"No," Roberto said, his lip curling, "There's no excuse. Fuck him."

Adam didn’t say anything, and Roberto patted his side which was more than he’d expected.

“Well,” Lee said, “If you want to go home I get it. But could you at least help me set up? I’ve done classes before, it's no problem, I just need your plan and all that.”

Adam nodded. “Ok.”

“We just have to eat first.”

“That’s fine.”

He watched them both eat, though the laughter was now gone which made him feel a little bad. Adam found himself looking around the breakroom, taking it in, and the sight of Will’s fallen plate made him pause.

“Will threw his plate on the floor.”

“I’ll pick it up,” Roberto said, “You two just go do whatever.”

Lee patted his back. “He’s a good kid sometimes, right? Though he’s still kinda a shit.”

Roberto stuck up his middle finger and laughed, which made Adam smile too as Lee hugged him kissing his cheeks one by one.

“I love you ‘Berto!”

“Gross! Go do you work!”

Adam and Lee went to the first of the conference/classrooms, unlocking the door before they flipped on the light. Adam's chest hurt at the thought he'd miss his first class, something he'd prepared presentations for months to teach, but the thought of being with that many alphas made him want to throw up. He knew he couldn't do it.

Not tonight.

"Now, if you just…"

"Am I early?"

They both turned at the exact same time and Adam's heart skipped a beat.

It was Nigel.

"How the hell did you get in?"

Nigel smiled. "The door, Darling, just as you."

"Well, it's not time yet so get your ass…"

"He…he can stay," Adam interrupted, his voice shaking, "I…I don't mind."

Lee looked back and forth between them. "Adam, are you…"

Adam started to set out the packets on the desks, blushing, and didn't look up again.

“He’s not on the roster, but…I think we have the space.”

Nigel sat down in the front row, right by the door, and Adam made sure to give him his packet last. Their fingers brushed just slightly, barely a touch at all, but Adam felt slick drip from his backside.

“Thank you, Star,” Nigel said.

“I…I didn’t think you were coming. You took your name off.”

Nigel opened his packet, then reached down to pull out a very nice Apple macbook that he put on the desk. “I had plans but…they were changed. I’m all yours tonight, Mr. Raki.”

Adam licked his lips. “I don’t think you need this class at all.”

He opened up his laptop and smirked, starting it up. “No? We’ll see.”

Adam turned away, smiling and when he got to the front Lee looked oddly concerned. “Adam, maybe…”

“I’m fine, Lee,” he said, sitting at the desk, “I…I’m not scared anymore.”

Lee looked over at Nigel. “I see that, Addie, but…did you ever think maybe you should be?”

Adam looked at Nigel again and Nigel winked at him before he began typing something.

“No,” he said, “I…I don’t think so. Nigel would never hurt me.”

Lee sighed.

“That’s what they all say, Adam. That’s what they all say.”

Chapter 6

Adam felt Nigel's eyes on him the entire time as they set things up and tried not to sneak glances though the temptation was hard to resist. Nigel's scent was harder to ignore in this smaller space, and his slick was getting harder to pretend wasn't there.

"Adam?"

He blushed, and realized he'd been staring though Nigel was hard at work typing something on his laptop.

"I apologize, I was…"

Lee smiled. "Staring?"

He shook his head. "I wasn't staring."

Lee put a hand on his arm and leaned in slightly. "If you need to leave, Addie, I understand. I can do this."

"I'm *fine* , Lee."

"Ad…"

"I think you should go check on the door," Adam said, his voice tight, "People are going to come in soon."

Lee sighed. “I should’ve just left it unlocked, seeing as how we’d need to unlock again anyway.”

“It was dangerous.”

Lee looked over at Nigel. “Yeah, apparently it was letting in all the worst things.”

Adam frowned. “He isn’t…that bad.”

He sighed again. “Just…promise me you’ll stay over here.”

“I’m not a child, Lee,” Adam mumbled, looking at Nigel, “You don’t…”

Lee turned Adam’s cheek. “Adam, how many alphas have you been with? Just the one?”

Adam blushed. “We shouldn’t be talking about this at work.”

“Adam…”

“Yes,” Adam said, “Just Beth.”

“I’ve been with *a lot* more. I know alphas better than most, and I…I know *you* . Nigel might be…something…but that doesn’t mean he’s…the best for you.”

Adam stepped away from him, his stomach hurting, and shook his head.

“He’s not anything to me,” he said, “He’s just…I like how he smells, that's all.”

Lee sighed. “Fine, just…just stay here. Please?”

Adam nodded, and Lee left to go reopen the doors while he sat at the desk. Nigel looked up, his smile fading, and Adam’s chest hurt worse to see it go.

“What did he say to you, Star?”

He looked away, and pulled out his notes. “Nothing.”

“You smell upset.”

“I’m not…”

“Star, I know how you smell when you’re upset. You’ve smelled that way with me plenty of times, so…”

Adam looked up. “You shouldn’t call me that.”

Nigel blinked. “Call you what? Star?”

He blushed. “Yes, it’s…I don’t like nicknames.”

Nigel smiled. “No? You seemed to like it before.”

“It’s just…not proper. We’re not mates, and it’s…I don’t think you should.”

He sighed. “Alright, Adam. I won’t.”

Adam’s chest hurt for how easily he took it back, but he looked down pretending to scan his notes. The sound of several voices made him look up again, and he saw a few familiar faces among the alphas heading inside.

They all looked at him a little too long when they entered, some quite a lot older than him by many years, and Adam felt a little uncomfortable by the scrutiny. Lee came in after the alphas, and came right up to Adam.

“You ok?”

He nodded. “Yes, I…I’m fine.”

Lee looked back at Nigel. “He do anything?”

“No.”

“Adam…”

“No, Lee,” he said, getting upset, “He didn’t do anything, I just…I need to go to the bathroom.”

Adam got up fast, rushing from the room, and went right to the first stall shutting the door before he sat down. He took several breaths, happy to be away from the overwhelming alpha scents, and closed his eyes.

He could do this.

Alphas were a part of life he’d have to get used to sooner or later, right?

Adam took a few more breaths, letting them out slowly, and went to stand just as he heard the door open. He froze, worried about who might be inside, and waited as they went to the stall beside his.

He took another deep breath, and calmed down when a faint scent hit his nose.

Nigel.

"You alright?"

"Yes," he said.

"You can leave, Darling, you know that right? I came to learn from you, but…I'll walk you out if that's what you need."

Adam sighed. "I…I want to stay."

Nigel was quiet, obviously not moving, and Adam just enjoyed the faint scent of him alone. He'd never smelled any alpha who smelled as good as Nigel did.

"If any of them give you shit, I'm not gonna hold back. You know?"

Adam frowned. "I'm not a child, Nigel. I can…I can take care of myself."

"I know, S…Adam. I know."

"You can go now."

Nigel didn't leave right away, and Adam didn't move though he looked down at his feet. He could see Nigel's shoes close, and resisted the urge to touch their feet together. Adam heard Nigel sigh before he got up and left, the door closing behind him. He got out as well, washed his hands out of habit, and went out only to see Nigel waiting by the door. Adam froze, struck at being so close, and breathed in as Nigel did the same.

"I told you to go."

"I wasn't gonna let one of those assholes come in there, Star."

"I told you I don't…"

Nigel smiled. "Can I call you *Mr. Raki* then?"

Adam blushed. "I…yes."

"Let's get back to class, *Mr. Raki.* "

Adam felt slick start to drip from his backside, and squeezed himself tight as he walked. This wasn't good, not at all, but he didn't want to stop which might be worse. Nigel let him go first when they got to the door, and the class was a lot more full as Lee paused mid-sentence to glare at Nigel.

"Excuse us a moment," he said, grabbing Adam's arm.

Lee shut the door, and walked Adam around the nearest corner. "Are you ok? I saw him gone but I couldn't leave the room. I called your cell but you didn't answer."

Adam nodded. "I'm fine Lee."

“Adam…”

“I’m fine. Let’s go back to class, we only have an hour, remember?”

“I remember, Adam, but I also remember that we’re two omegas in a room full of single alphas. Anything can happen.”

Adam frowned. “Lee…”

“Just…nevermind. Let’s go get this over with.”

He walked back with Lee, feeling worse than ever, and the alphas all turned to stare as they entered.

“Welcome to Computer 101,” Lee said, “Let’s get this party started, huh?”

Adam sat at the desk, his anxiety rising, and couldn’t help but look at Nigel. Nigel stared right back, his intense gaze going right to Adam’s core, and he found it hard to look away.

“...and this,” Lee said, clicking the overhead projector remote, “Is what you do with your email.”

Adam wiggled in his seat, heart beating wildly in his chest, and found it hard to concentrate.

“...then you can make an account just right…”

He felt sweat drip from his forehead and wiped it off before he forced himself to look away.

It was too soon for another heat.

What was wrong with him?

"...and Adam will help with….anything else. So get started."

Adam looked up, locked eyes with Lee, who rushed over to him. "Adam?"

He felt tears fill his eyes. "I think I have to go."

Lee glared back at Nigel, and then wiped Adam's forehead. "I'll call Grigg. He can come."

"Lee, I think I'm…I can't stay with all these alphas. It's…it's dangerous."

"Shit."

Adam was shaking, unable to stop, and looked up to see Nigel's desk empty. He frowned, confused, and looked around but Nigel was nowhere to be seen.

"Nigel…where is Nigel?"

Lee looked back again. "He…he was just here."

Adam felt like he was going to be sick as tears blurred his vision. "Lee…"

Lee turned to the other alphas.

“I’m sorry but…class has to be cut short. Please leave, we’ll refund your admission.”

The alphas all started to speak up, and Adam found it hard to stay so he took off running. He went to Will’s office, locked the door, and sat on the floor in tears as slick coated his pants.

What was wrong with him?

He took out his phone, whimpering as he dialed, and Grigg answered right away.

“Adam?”

“I think I’m going into another heat,” he whispered, “I don’t…I don’t know what’s wrong with me but I need…I need someone to take me home.”

“I’m coming,” Grigg said, “I’m putting on my shoes now just…where are you?”

“I’m in Will’s office. Grigg, he left. He…he left.”

“Who left? Adam?”

He dropped the phone, covered his face, and laid on the floor as he stuffed his hand into his pants stroking himself as the tears came.

“Alpha.”

Adam barely heard the door open, and was so dazed he practically laid on Grigg's shoulder as they went to the car. He was shaking as Grigg strapped him in, and wiped his face staring out the window.

They drove off, leaving the library behind, and Adam fell against Lee's shoulder.

"Adam?"

"He left," he repeated, whimpering, "He…he left."

"Who left, Adam?"

Adam sniffled. "Nigel."

Grigg sighed. "Adam…"

"I don't know what's wrong with me."

"It's gonna be ok, Adam. I promise."

Adam barely remembered getting home, nor did he remember Grigg making him food but he woke up hours later grabbing his artificial knot to dull the ache inside him. He fucked himself slow, crying, and came with a shout spilling across his sheets. It felt hollow, empty, and yet he was calmer than before.

He got up, went to the fridge, and found macaroni in a container waiting with a note.

CALL ME WHEN YOU GET UP - GRIGG

Adam reheated the macaroni and sat at his kitchen table wearing nothing but his dress shirt while the night came back in a rush.

Nigel had left.

Had he been disgusted?

Or was he too aroused to stay?

He felt slick pool at his backside and groaned.

“No,” he sighed, “No, no.”

The ache began again, feeling just like a heat, and Grigg barely made it to his bed before he was fucking himself again. He got lost in the haze, barely able to think about anything at all, and when he finally came out of the need he felt hollow.

His phone said it was Sunday night, and he was so hungry he made himself a whole new pot of macaroni. He ate it all, showered, and called Grigg.

“Adam.”

“I had another heat.”

“Yeah, we figured.”

“You and who?”

“Lee.”

Adam sat on his bed, feeling so confused, and wiped at the tears in his eyes.

“I don’t like this, Grigg. I don’t like it at all.”

“I know, Adam. I…I know.”

He sniffled.

“I think I need to go on scent blockers.”

Grigg was quiet.

“Adam, that’s…it can mess with your heats worse sometimes going on those.”

Adam’s vision blurred. “I don’t know what else to do.”

Grigg sighed.

“Take a few days off,” he said, “Will is out with his…thing…and you’ve got time. Maybe you just need to be away from things for a while.”

“I don’t like not going to work.”

“I know that, but—”

“I’ll talk to you later, Grigg. I just…thank you for helping me.”

“You’re welcome. Goodnight, Adam.”

“Goodnight, Grigg.”

Adam laid down after the call, and pulled the blankets over himself. He forced himself not to think about Nigel, and sighed.

Maybe he did need some time off.

Just a little.

He picked up his phone again and texted.

Adam *: Can someone put in PTO for me? I…I’m going to take three days unless someone else is, and I know we can’t bother Will.*

Grigg: I will. Feel better Adam.

SecondAdam: Feel better Addie!

Lee: *hugs* Feel better, Adam.

He put down his phone and sighed.

Everything was going to be ok.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

So about this.

I just recently reread this story because I got a comment and it made me want to, and began to write what I thought was chapter eight.

But actually I already wrote chapter eight.

The chapter I posted here was actually chapter ten - but somehow that chapter was actually a continuation from chapter six. So……this is the REAL chapter seven.

I have no idea how this happened. But yes, here is chapter seven.

I am now off to work on the REAL chapter ten.

Adam's heat lasted an entire week this time. He was exhausted after, barely able to do more than sleep, but still he found it harder than anything to deal with the changes to his schedule. His days were always planned, always the same, and these changes to his routine were starting to wear on him.

Though the idea of returning to the library seemed like a much worse idea.

He researched a lot on heats, spontaneous and normal, and found little to help other than random articles on true mates.

True mates weren't a real thing, no matter how many movies there were about it, and he refused to believe something like that. He thought about visiting Harlan on his time off, but found out Harlan was on a vacation of his own so that wasn't possible.

"It's not like you to be off work, Son," Harlan said, as Adam ate dinner just a few days after his heat, "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," he lied, "I just…wanted to see you."

"You've never come to see me since I moved, Adam Raki, and you know it. What's going on?"

Adam gripped his fork tight. "I…I've been having some problems at work."

"With that girl?" Harlan asked, "That Beth woman? She still comin' around?"

“Yes, no, I…no it’s not her. She’s been leaving me alone.”

“Then what?”

“I’m just not good around alphas, that’s all.”

“I thought all your coworkers were omegas.”

“They are, but—”

“Adam.”

“I have to go, Harlan,” he lied, “I…I’ll call you tomorrow.”

“Adam wait just–”

Adam ended the call, and ignored Harlan’s call back moments later. He should never have called him, he realized that now, but he’d needed to talk to someone who didn’t know.

He turned to his laptop, the video paused on his program, and minimized the video to search something.

Scent blockers.

Scent blockers weren’t exactly ideal, but it would give him some time to think and not be so affected by whatever was happening with Nigel. He read all he could, deep into the reasoning, when he heard a knock at his door.

He froze.

“Adam? It’s me.”

It was Grigg.

Adam got up, pulling on his robe, and unlocked the door. Grigg stood there with a smile, and a bag in his hand. “Hey, I was in the neighborhood so I thought I’d stop by to check on you.”

He didn’t move. “I’m fine, you can go home now.”

Grigg laughed. “Adam, let me in.”

Adam bit his lip. “It smells inside from my heat.”

“I don’t care.”

He felt tears in his eyes. “I…I don’t…”

Grigg put a hand on his where it held the door. “Adam, I’m not here to baby you. Okay? I’m your friend, and I want to be sure you’re ok.”

He let out a long breath and stepped aside before he headed back to his table. Grigg locked the door behind him when he came in and set down his bag.

“How have you been? I wanted to come a few times and use the key but Lee said I should let you be this time.”

Adam took a bite of his food, not looking at him. “I’m fine.”

“Will’s back,” Grigg said, coming to sit across from him, “He looks like shit but he’s back. Which is kinda good since Dr. Lecter wouldn’t stop hounding us about where he was.”

He frowned, and took another bite.

“Roberto headed back to school,” Grigg said, “He says he’ll be too busy the next few months to come in so we might have to look for a new page but Lee says we can do it ourselves.”

Adam took a sip of his juice and looked up at Grigg.

“I’m not coming back to work yet.”

Grigg blinked. “I…ok. I’m not here to force you to come back, Adam.”

“I just…I can’t…” his voice shook as he squeezed his hands into fists, “It’s too…”

He heard Grigg sigh.

“Adam, I…I think you should know…Nigel hasn’t been coming around. At all. Not once.”

Adam looked up sharply. “Not at all?”

“No,” Grigg frowned, “I’ve even been looking outside a few times, you know? To see if he’s just waiting there, but…he’s just not.”

Adam’s chest tightened. “Oh.”

“So if you do want to come back to work, I think you’d be ok. If…that’s what you’re worried about.”

He closed his eyes. “I…I still think I maybe should go on scent blockers.”

Grigg grabbed his hand and Adam opened his eyes to look at him. “Adam, it’s a bad idea. I know you don’t like what you’re…having to deal with…but it’s a really bad idea.”

Adam felt tears fall down his cheeks. “I don’t know what else to do.”

“Nigel isn’t coming around, and Will says he can ban him from coming inside if that’s what you want. We want you to be comfortable, Adam.”

He wiped his face. “Ok.”

“Do you want Will to ban him? Cuz he says he will, you just have to…”

“No,” Adam said, staring at their hands, “I…I think how Nigel smells and I…I think it might be worse if he’s not allowed inside. I…I’ll be ok.”

“And if you’re not?”

Adam looked up again. “I don’t know.”

Grigg ended up staying for dinner, sharing the rest of his macaroni and cheese, and when he left Adam felt better about coming back to work. Grigg said he’d talk to Will for him, which was good since he wasn’t ready to do that either, and he went to bed that night feeling slightly better.

He got up the next morning early to have breakfast , took a shower, and got dressed before he headed for the library. Adam was thankful to see Grigg’s car in the lot when he pulled up to his space, and went to put his lunch away.

And found Second Adam staring at his phone looking oddly upset.

“Adam?”

Adam looked up, shoved his phone into his pants, and ran up to him. “Addie! You’re back!”

He hugged Adam, who didn’t hug back, and couldn’t help but frown.

“Are you ok?”

“Me? I’m not the one who had TWO heats this month. Are YOU ok?”

Adam nodded. “I’m fine.”

“Good, good, that bloody alpha really has you in a loop, eh?”

“I don’t…”

He laughed. “You’ll get over it, I’m sure, Darling. Some alphas…are harder to get over than others.”

Adam saw him frown again.

“Adam…”

“I’m gonna go put away Roberto’s cart before we open up. I can’t believe Lee wants us to do that kid’s job.”

Adam didn’t say anything as he left and went to put his food away when someone else came in behind him. He knew at once by the scent who it was.

“Will.”

He turned and there was Will looking much worse than usual.

“Adam,” he said curtly, “I…I know I should probably not be coming in here when you’re by yourself after how I…I still…dammitt. I’m so sorry about what happened. I understand if you’re not ok with being around me, or if you want me to quit or…”

Adam closed the freezer door and came up to Will, carefully putting a hand on his shoulder.

“You weren’t in control of yourself, I understand.”

Will let out a long sigh. “Oh, thank god. I…I’ve been…this past week has been the absolute worst and you’re…I’d never hurt you. You know that, right?”

Adam nodded. “I do.”

He saw what looked like tears in the corner of Will’s eyes. “Well then, I…I’m gonna get back to the office and…you know if you need any help with N—”

“I’m fine,” Adam said, “Just fine.”

“Ok.”

They walked out to the main area together in silence and went their separate ways. Adam was happy to sit back at his desk, breathing in the familiar scents of books mixed with his coworkers, and checked the time.

The library was going to be open in a half hour.

He had plenty of time.

Adam checked his emails, finding mostly spam, but there were some orders and even a new donation that made his eyes widen.

One thousand dollars had been donated directly for books about space to be added to the library by an anonymous donor.

His eyes widened.

There were occasions when donors wanted entire sections of books with their names on them, so they’d add little plaques on the shelves, but this? This was unusual. The donation had been made using their donation button on their website.

He was so excited that he immediately opened up the distributor page to start looking.

They had so few books about space in the library, especially in the children’s section, and Adam began adding things to his cart. He got so caught up he hardly noticed the library was open at all until someone came up to his desk.

“Excuse me, Mister Raki?”

Adam looked up fast, startled, and a young blonde boy stood in front of his desk.

“Yes?”

“I need help on the computer.”

“Oh,” Adam said, standing, “Of course.”

Adam helped the boy, whose name was Sam, and then another older woman named Cindy. He got so caught up in helping that he hardly noticed the time until his stomach started to growl when finally sat down.

He looked at his phone.

“Oh.”

It was noon.

He went to the breakroom and found Grigg arguing with Lee about some television show, but didn’t pay attention. Adam ate fast, heading out again, and looked at the door.

His gaze lingered for so long Grigg came up to shake him. “Adam? You ok?”

Adam blinked. “I…yes, I’m fine.”

Lee frowned. “You were staring at the door awfully hard, Addie. You sure you don’t need to go back home?”

He blushed. “No, I’m fine. Thank you.”

Adam went back to work, pushing Nigel out of his head.

Which turned out to be a good thing.

Because Nigel didn’t come in that whole week.

Or the next.

Or the next.

Adam was almost sure Nigel would never come back into the library again until one Monday morning he looked up to see him coming toward him.

“Nigel.”

Nigel looked terrible, like he hadn’t slept in a long time, and he clutched something in his hand that he put down in front of Adam.

It was a black ring box.

Adam’s eyes widened.

“I…”

Nigel didn't say a word, turned, and left the library again.

He stared at the box, unsure of what to do, just as all three - Lee, Grigg, and Second Adam - came running over.

"Adam? You ok? What's…oh shit."

Adam opened the box, hands shaking, and looked inside.

It was a ring.

There was no note other than an insert that looked like it was from the place Nigel had gotten his ring from that Grigg picked up immediately.

"It's meteorite," Grigg said, "And…dinosaur bone? What a strange combination."

Adam stared at the ring, completely shocked and also entirely confused.

What had just happened?

Where had Nigel been?

And why had he given him a ring for no reason at all?

"Adam?"

He closed the ring box and shoved it into his desk drawer. "I think everyone needs to get back to work."

All three of them looked at each other. "Ok, Adam, just…if you need anything…"

Adam didn't say a word, though he did open his drawer to peek at the box again. He felt warmth fill him at the gift, but it wasn't a scary feeling like it had been a few weeks ago.

He was happy.

The thought of wearing the ring made him wiggle in his seat, but he also worried about what that might mean.

He sighed, and looked at the door Nigel had left from.

Would he come back?

Was this a goodbye gift?

His happiness suddenly disappeared.

Was he never going to see Nigel again?

Chapter 8

Adam didn't put on the ring.

He kept it with him everyday, sitting in his desk drawer or at home on his night stand, and yet not once did he lift it up to put it on any of his fingers.

The ring both thrilled and confused him, which was why he wasn't sure what to do especially when Nigel didn't come back the next day.

"You ok?" Grigg asked, making Adam frown as he ate lunch.

"Why wouldn't I be?"

"It's just…all this stuff with Nigel and the ring. I know it's…"

"I'm fine, Grigg."

Grigg nodded. "Ok, Adam. Just…if you need anything I'm here."

Adam didn't need anything, no matter how much he kept looking at the ring, and yet over the next few days Grigg and the others would look down at his hand, like they wanted to ask, but no one did.

He couldn't help but open his drawer several times during the day to get a look at it, wanting to touch it and yet scared to even think that way. Was this a goodbye gift or a courting one? Adam wasn't ready to be courted, even if Nigel made him feel better than any alpha ever had, but he didn't want to say no either.

So he waited.

And waited.

Nigel came back three days later, looking just fine compared to when he'd last been in the library, and yet when his gaze went down to Adam's hand his expression changed. Adam felt instant panic when Nigel came up to the desk and closed the drawer as he looked up at him.

"Busy today," he said, looking back at the computers all taken, "No room for me, then?"

Adam blushed. "There's a time limit," he said, his voice shaking, "If you wait…there will be."

He smiled and looked at Adam's hands again. "You didn't like it?"

"I…I'm not…"

"Hey Addie," Second Adam said, coming out of nowhere, "You busy?"

Adam frowned. "Yes."

Second Adam looked at Nigel. "He bothering you?"

Nigel scoffed and his smile widened as he whispered, "Did you know that *he* can hear you?"

"Adam?"

“No,” he said, blushing more, “We were just talking and…” he paused when someone got up from the computers, and pointed, “...I was telling Nigel that the computers might be free soon. See? There’s one now.”

Nigel turned. “Look at that,” he said, then looked back at them, “Do I have to sign in, Darling?”

“N..n…no,” Adam said, “I can sign you in.”

“Excellent,” he said, “Now you and this one can talk about me when I’m gone. Carry on.”

He left them and went to the open seat, looking over to wink, and Adam felt oddly flustered.

“I’ve never met an alpha who knows just how handsome is as much as that one does,” Second Adam sighed, “You really picked one, didn’t you?”

Adam frowned at him. “What does that mean?”

He smiled and shook his head. “Nothing, Addie, just…be careful.”

“I’m not afraid of him,” he said, blushing, “Why do I have to be careful? He’s not going to hurt me.”

Second Adam put a hand on his shoulder. “Alphas can hurt you in many different ones, you know? You…well you do know. After that mess with the *other* one.”

Adam’s chest tightened. “I don’t think…I don’t know if this is the same.”

“No, but…still…be careful.”

He nodded. “You can go now.”

Second Adam laughed. “I’ll go, but still…be careful. Yeah?”

Adam didn’t say anything, just nodded again, and when Second Adam was gone he looked at what Nigel was searching. He frowned when he seemed to be looking up flights to Romania, and wondered if that was where Nigel had been for so long. His searches varied throughout his time - Romania flights, some clothes, and once he even tried to look at pornography but got blocked by their filter. Adam was sure he did that on purpose, given the look he gave, and Adam blushed before he pulled open the drawer again.

The ring was there, almost calling to him to open the box, and he closed the drawer before he could.

Now was not the time.

Nigel left before his time was up, much to Adam’s disappointment, but he gave Adam a look that made him leak just a little. He didn’t know why, but didn’t look away, and when Nigel left he was almost grateful.

His anticipation between Nigel’s appearances aside, he was so worn out from these feelings that he wasn’t sure what to do.

Which was why he was glad to see a familiar face.

Duncan Vizla, an alpha fairly new to the library over the past month, was very polite when he asked questions yet still had trouble navigating most of the time.

“Hello Adam,” he said, smiling, “I don’t mean to bother you but—”

Adam shook his head. “You’re not bothering me, what do you need?”

“I’m having some trouble, the mouse is…not moving.”

He sighed. “They’re older computers,” he said, standing, “They act like that sometimes. Let me help.”

They went back together, and he rebooted the system when nothing else seemed to work.

“I can get you a different computer,” he said, “Or you can just wait.”

Duncan sighed. “I really need to get a new one and try to get into all this new…stuff. I’ve been working so much I’ve just never had time.”

Adam frowned. “You know, I teach a computer class on Fridays. You can always sign up.”

He frowned. “I don’t have a working computer.”

“You said you wanted to get one.”

“Yes, but…”

Adam stood. “Or not,” he said, “It’s your choice. Do you need any more help?”

“No,” Duncan said, smiling, “Thank you, Adam.”

“You’re welcome.”

Adam headed back toward his desk to sit and stopped when he saw Grigg peeking from behind one of the stacks. “Grigg?”

He disappeared fast, like he hadn’t wanted to be seen, and Adam just sat down again.

If Grigg needed help he’d just ask.

He pulled up his list for the next class, and found not many names there, but there were a few more days left till then so maybe people were just too busy to sign up right now. Nigel’s name was there, making his heart skip a beat, and he found himself opening the drawer again just as someone cleared their throat.

“Excuse me.”

Adam looked up to see Hannibal Lecter standing across from him.

“Yes?”

“I’m not one for…turning in children…but…I found this on one of the shelves. The offenders are right now hiding in the children’s area, no doubt ready to accost another book the same way.”

The book in his hands was torn up, much to Adam’s dismay, and what was worse was that it was one of the newer books they’d just got in on Astronomy. “Oh no, no, no, no…”

“Are you alright? I….”

He felt tears fill his eyes as he let out a long breath and set the book down.

“Thank you. You can go now.”

Hannibal frowned. “You’re shaking. Do you need me to get someone?”

“I…”

He shook his head. “No, no, you can go. Please go.”

“Yes, I…I apologize for the upset.”

Adam put his hands on the desk, trying to calm down, and finally couldn’t take it anymore. He grabbed the book and headed for the children’s section, right to Lee whose eyes widened when got close. “Adam? What’s…”

He slammed the book down and the noise was heard everywhere but Adam didn’t care.

“*Children* did this,” he hissed, his voice just above a whisper, “And they’re probably doing it over here now you…you need to get them to go.”

Lee put his hand on Adam’s. “Yeah,” he said, “I…I’ll get ‘em just…go calm down in the bathroom. Ok? Your face is all red.”

Adam felt a tear fall down his cheek. “I just put this book out less than a month ago, and there’s only been two people who…who got to take it. It’s ruined now, and…”

“Hey, hey…”

“What’s going on?” he heard Will say and took off running but not the bathroom.

He went out the front door.

There were some children out front making noise and Adam wanted to yell but held his tongue. He went to his car and got inside before he screamed as loud as he possibly could. The relief was immediate, and he laid his head down as he felt tears on his face.

A minute later someone knocked on his window.

He turned and saw Will looking in his window. “Adam? What’s…can I come in?”

Adam nodded and Will slid in the passenger’s seat before he closed the door.

“I’m fine.”

“You’re crying.”

“I really…I…I don’t know why I’m so upset. It’s just a book.”

He sighed. “I can get a new one.”

“It’s very expensive.”

“Yeah, but I can get a new one. Okay?”

Adam sniffled. “Ok.”

“Lee found the kids doodling in some magazines, he’s got them sitting at his desk now. Is that all this was? I…I saw…I saw Hannibal Lecter come up to your desk earlier. Did he…”

Adam shook his head. “He found the book, that was all.”

“Oh.”

He wiped his eyes. “I feel like I overreacted.”

“If you could see those kids’ faces you’d know you didn’t. I can have kids like that ruining expensive books and they’d have done it again if you didn’t tell Lee. So…you did good and…”

“Hannibal was the one who found the book. You should thank him, I’m sure he’s inside somewhere because he likes coming to see you.”

Will blushed. “What? He…no. That’s not why he comes in.”

“He only does things to get you to come up to him, and he…he looks at you all the time. I’m sure he is.”

He laughed, shaking his head. “No, that’s…Adam, let's not talk about this.”

“Ok.”

Will sighed. “So, if you want to take an early day that’s fine. Grigg can take over the desk, since his boyfriend is there he’s been staring at him anyway.”

“Boyfriend?”

“The…nevermind. Do you want to take the rest of the day or go back?”

Adam sighed. “I…I’m gonna go back. I have things to get from my desk, and…there’s only a few hours left.”

“Ok. I…I’ll order that book. Ok?”

“Will, you…”

He patted Adam’s shoulder. “Yeah, I do.”

They left at the same time, walking together, and when they got inside Hannibal Lecter came up to him without even looking at Will. “Are you alright, Mr. Raki?”

“Yes, thank you.”

“I didn’t mean to…”

“Well, you *did*,” Will hissed, “You upset him, and it’s not your place to go patrolling the shelves so you really need to…”

Hannibal glared at Will. “Someone has to, do they not? You don’t have anyone here to put things away since that college student went back to school.”

“I…I was getting around to…”

“I’m certain you were, Mister…”

“Please stop,” Adam said, stepping back, “Just…stop.”

They both looked at him, then each other, and Will growled before he stomped off without another word.

“You really need to stop upsetting him, it’s not…Will doesn’t like it.”

Hannibal smirked. “No? You’re sure about that?”

“I…”

“Have a good rest of your afternoon, Adam. I apologize again for the…upset.”

Adam didn’t get to say anything else because he walked past him out the door, and he realized Hannibal hadn’t even been holding a single book.

Strange.

Why had he come in then?

He sighed and went back to his desk. Adam gave in to the immediate urge to open the drawer again, and even the box. The ring was cold when he touched it, and he bit his lip to try not to think about how much he wanted to wear it.

Adam closed the drawer again and bunched his hands into fists.

No.

He wasn’t ready.

Not today.

Chapter 9

Computer class was different this time, and not only because Adam was teaching alone.

He had other people in class this time, not just alphas, and while he'd been much more worried about the last class because of Nigel now it felt different.

Nigel was here.

And he felt better.

Adam didn't go near Nigel, just looked occasionally to be sure he'd stayed, and when things ended, he cleaned up slowly lingering in hope to catch one more look. He peeked out of the corner of his eye, seeing Nigel close his laptop, and then noticed Duncan doing the same. Duncan came over to him and Adam stood up straighter.

"Thank you for this," he said, "I really do think I have the hang of things now."

He nodded. "It's not as hard as a lot of people think," he said, "It's all a matter of perspective. Everyone *can* learn new things; it just is harder for some than others."

Duncan smiled. "Even old dogs can learn new tricks, eh?"

"I suppose," Adam said, "Though I don't like that metaphor."

"Ah," he mumbled, "I…I suppose I should…" he paused to look at Nigel, who seemed to be taking his time, "Or I can walk you to your car, if you need me to?"

“No,” Adam said, “I’m fine.”

Duncan frowned. “You’re sure?”

“Uh huh, thank you anyway. Goodnight, Duncan.”

Duncan backed off. “Goodnight.”

He lingered a little outside the classroom, peeking in through the window, but once he was gone Adam was relieved.

Nigel all but rushed up, computer bag in hand, and put his hand on Adam’s desk.

“Took him long enough to leave.”

Adam blushed. “He was looking out for me.”

“From me, Darling? I’m offended.”

He looked away, feeling the ring box in his pocket. “You’re an unmated alpha and I’m an unmated omega. It’s common for other alphas, especially older ones to worry.”

They were both quiet, and Adam both wanted him to go and also to stay.

“Younger alphas worry too, Star.”

Adam looked at him. “You shouldn’t call me that.”

“Why?” he asked, leaning in just a little, “Because you enjoy it?”

He felt slick build at his backside and blushed more. “No, I just…”

Nigel stepped back, smirking, and shook his head. “I get it, Darling, I really do. But you’re not exactly running away from me, are you?”

Adam frowned. “Are you implying you’re entitled to my time because I’m not running from you?”

“No, that’s…”

He stood up. “It’s quite wrong to even imply such a thing, and I’m not comfortable being here any longer alone with you. I need to leave.”

“Adam, just…”

Adam grabbed his things, getting more upset as he did, and ran out of the classroom right into Will who apparently had been standing outside watching them. He looked up at him.

“I’m fine.”

“You look terrified, what…”

Nigel took off, glaring at them both, and said nothing while Adam just ached to see him go.

“He just…spoke to me…in a way I didn’t like.”

“I’ll ban that bastard from ever coming here again, Adam. Just say the word.”

He shook his head. “I don’t want you to do that.”

“Why? I don’t…I get that you’re attracted to him. Ok? We all know that.”

Adam backed off. “I’m not…”

“Adam, you stare at him openly every time he comes into the library and I…I can smell you. Alright? I honestly get that I have no say in your personal life. I do. But maybe he’s not the one. Maybe…”

“I have to go,” Adam said, “Goodnight, Will.”

He rushed out the door, needing to be alone again, and got into his car locking it behind him. The quiet was better, always had been, and he closed his eyes just as his ringing cellphone startled him out of the calm.

Adam looked at the name.

Beth.

He turned off the ringer, setting it in his drink holder, and started the car.

His drive home was short but when he saw Beth standing outside he just drove around the block not ready to go home.

Adam parked in a grocery store parking lot, tears in his eyes, and thought of calling someone.

Grigg would come if he called and yet he didn't.

He got out of the car, heading toward the store doors, and despite hating the change to his schedule forced himself to shop for dinner. It was wrong and his skin crawled the longer he was there but when he got out he felt safer.

Better.

Adam drove back to his building and was thankful to see Beth not outside. He got out with bags in hand and went up the stairs only to find Beth at his door.

"Beth."

"Adam, I really think…"

He put up his hand. "Please, Beth. Please don't. I can't."

She paused, her face scrunched up oddly, and scoffed, turning away as she left him. He let out a long breath before he stepped inside, locking things again. It wouldn't take long for her to come back, he knew that, but tonight he'd have time alone.

He put away his food before he started dinner, back on track with his schedule already.

It was his regular macaroni and cheese, and yet as he ate Adam imagined Nigel sitting on the other side of the table. He pulled the ring box out of his pocket and put it on the table just to see his gift again.

“Alpha.”

The ring wasn’t pretty, but Adam loved it.

He really did.

His fingers brushed the cold meteorite, and he thought of taking the ring out just once to try on but wondered if he’d be able to take it off.

Could he?

Adam closed the box again and finished his food before he sat down to watch a documentary. This was the same routine he had almost everyday, and yet every time he looked beside him it felt like someone was missing.

“Alpha.”

He got up, grabbed the ring, and went to his bedroom.

The sudden wetness at his backside made him antsy, and he got out his artificial knot. It wasn’t something he’d use outside of heats or didn’t usually but suddenly he had to.

He undressed, imaginary eyes on him from the dark, and laid in bed.

Adam shivered at the sudden chill, and pulled up the blanket just before he slid the knot inside him. The first touch to his hole made him whimper, eyes squeezed closed, and he could almost hear Nigel’s voice.

“That’s it, Darling, you can take this for me. I know you can.”

He moaned, moving faster, and the imagined voice felt like it was right by his ear.

"You look so pretty, Star. So, so pretty like this. You're doing so well. So fucking wet aren't you?"

Adam came with a groan, spilling across the inside of the blanket, and he kept on till the tremors went down. He sat there, all sticky, and opened his eyes.

"Nigel."

What if he was wrong?

What if Nigel just wanted to get him into bed and leave?

Could he do that, knowing what might happen?

He got up in tears, headed for the shower, and leaned against the wall as he tried not to cry.

Tomorrow was another day.

He knew that.

A better one.

Hopefully a better one.

Chapter 10

Adam spent most of the weekend staring at the ring Nigel gave him, eager to put it on but unsure, and by Sunday night he felt such a deep need to put it on he was almost sick even though he kept it close enough to touch.

He didn't like going out shopping but thought that maybe if he got a chain he could wear it around his neck.

Then it would be close to him always.

Adam purred as he looked online for chains, his chest tight when he couldn't find anything that looked quite right, and gave up by lunchtime. He went to make his regular meal but stopped halfway to the fridge when his phone rang.

He walked over to see a name lit up on the screen.

Second Adam.

"Hello?"

"Oh Addie, good, you're…." he sounded out of breath, and Adam frowned as he groaned.

"Are you having sex with someone while you're on the phone with me?"

"What?" Adam whimpered, "No, I…..I'm in heat, love. I….I'm having a terrible time of it too. Nothing works quite right."

"I'm not sure why you called me," he said, "This conversation is making me very uncomfortable. I'm going to end the call now."

Adam whined. "No, no!" he yelled, "I….I've ordered a new knot, and I….you live the closest to my place, Addie. I just need you to come bring it up to me. I can't have any alphas showing up, not….not on my heat."

"You….don't have one there now?"

"On a heat?" he laughed, "Darling, I'm not a bloody idiot."

"Oh," Adam bit his lip, "I'm very uncomfortable with the idea of going to your house for this purpose."

"Darling, I brought you an amazing knot, didn't…" he cursed, "Fuck, this fucking…..please Addie? You can just knock and go. That's all! You don't even have to come inside."

Adam sighed. "When is the knot coming?"

"According to the driver, in about…..twenty one minutes."

Adam looked at the time. “You live eighteen minutes from my apartment, Adam. That’s….you want me to intercept the driver, and they might get there before I do.”

“PLEASE ADDIE! I AM DYING HERE!”

He squeezed his hands at his sides and let out a long breath. “Ok,” he said, “I will leave now. Goodbye.”

“Add—-”

Adam grabbed his keys as he looked forlornly at his refrigerator before he left.

He had only been to Second Adam’s house twice since he’d started working at the library, once when Second Adam's car broke down he gave him a ride and the other had been when he’d insisted on a birthday party but a storm had made them all stay home.

Adam had enjoyed that, more than expected, and though he didn’t like spending the night at strange places it had been a nice evening.

A quiet one.

He pulled out of the parking lot slowly, put Second Adam’s address into the GPS, and began to drive.

It was strange that Second Adam hadn’t prepared himself for a heat. He was usually the best prepared sexually of all of them - even Lee - and Adam had always assumed he had alphas with him on heats.

But Adam had never had an alpha with him during any of his, so he didn’t really know what it would be like. Though if he ever did have any alpha help him with one he’d have to be sure he trusted them.

He felt warm as he suddenly thought of Nigel and wiggled in his seat.

Adam had tried not to think of Nigel again when he masturbated, but it seemed Nigel was all he could think of now to get to orgasm. He blushed, biting his lip, and a loud horn made him realize the light turned green.

He drove on, happy he was making such good time, and pulled into Second Adam’s apartment complex parking lot with two minutes to spare.

But heard arguing when he was halfway to the door.

“JUST LEAVE IT….ohhhh….OUTSIDE! I AM NOT LETTING YOU IN HERE!”

“I’m not leaving out here to get taken and have you give me a bad review! Just let me up there! I’m….”

Adam called out. “I’M HERE! I CAN TAKE IT!”

The driver, who was very obviously an alpha, glared at him as Adam heard Second Adam whimper in the intercom.

“BLOODY HELL ADAM GET UP HERE!”

Adam held out his hand to the driver. “I can take it, please. I know him.”

“I’m supposed to deliver it to Adam….”

“My name is Adam too,” he said, turning red as tears filled his eyes, “Please give me the package.”

“I…..”

“JUST GIVE IT TO ME! HE NEEDS IT!”

The alpha rushed forward, and Adam braced himself to be attacked when suddenly a low growl made him turn in surprise.

“GET THE FUCK AWAY FROM HIM!”

Nigel.

Nigel rushed at the alpha, making Adam whimper, and the man groaned as Nigel punched him in the face.

“Look, man, I didn’t mean to—-”

“You even think about touching an omega like that again, you fucking asshole, I swear….”

“Nigel.”

Nigel turned, his anger gone, and he sighed as he smiled at Adam.

“Hello, Star,” he said, “I….”

The other alpha got up and pushed the package at Nigel before he limped off. Adam sniffled as Nigel came closer, and he held out the box for him to take. Their fingers brushed, and Adam purred but covered his mouth as he blushed harder.

Nigel grinned.

“Don’t hide your purr, Adam,” he said, stepping closer, “Let me hear it.”

Adam let out a long purr, and Nigel reached out to touch his cheek.

“How….why are you here?”

Nigel smiled.

“Would you believe me if I told you lived here?”

“No,” Adam said, stepping back with a frown, “I wouldn’t.”

His smile faded, and he let out a long breath. “Would you believe me if I said…..I was….”

“I have to go,” Adam said fast, tears in his eyes, “Adam needs this.”

“Of course, Darling,” Nigel said, “Though you do need to be let inside.”

Adam walked up, pressed the button, and Second Adam’s moan on the other end of the intercom made him warm all over. “Ad…die…..please….”

“Let me inside, Adam.”

The buzz came and Adam rushed in the door but turned back to see Nigel still there. He smiled and walked over to the wall, where he pulled out a cigarette like he planned on a long wait.

Adam couldn’t help but be happy to know he might be there when he left and headed up two flights of stairs to Second Adam’s apartment. He knocked, and waited for Second Adam to open the door.

He looked very much in heat - his face flushed and the scent hit Adam all at once making him remember his own not too long ago now.

“I’m sorry you….”

“Thank you, Addie,” he said tiredly, taking the package, and then sniffed before he looked at Adam with wide eyes, “Is….Addie, have you been with….”

“I have to go,” Adam said, “Goodbye.”

Adam blushed bright red as he nearly ran down the stairs, eager to see if Nigel was still there, and when he wasn’t Adam’s disappointment was palpable. He could still smell the cigarette smoke in the air, like Nigel had just left, and the rejection hit him hard as he let out a whimper.

He knew it was probably not the best idea to be so upset, knowing Nigel had probably followed him here, but he was *very* upset as he headed back towards his car.

And froze when he saw Nigel leaning against it smoking as he smiled.

“Back so soon?”

Adam licked his lips. “I….he’s on his heat.”

“Ah,” Nigel said, as Adam leaned against the car, just on the side so they weren’t close, “And he called you? You said you weren’t…a thing.”

Adam shook his head. “We’re not,” he said, his voice shaking, “We’re just friends and he….he helped me during mine.”

Nigel growled. “Doing what?”

“Just this,” he said softly as he frowned, “He gave me….things to use.”

“Ah,” he said, calm again, “That’s….that’s good.”

Adam didn’t know what to do, and he put his hand into his pocket to touch the ring, but this time it didn’t calm him down.

Nigel took another long drag, and it was very arousing to see his throat move as he swallowed the air. He blew it out in a long puff, and Adam found it strange that he had begun to like the smell.

“You can go, Star,” he said, not looking at him, “I just….I know I shouldn’t have followed you but…thank fuck I did, yeah?”

Adam purred, stepping closer, and he put his hand on the car as Nigel’s hand crept closer but didn’t touch.

“Yes, thank you.”

“I told you younger alphas worry about omegas, not just the old as fuck ones.”

“You…you did.”

Nigel looked down at his hand. “Still don’t like it, huh?”

Adam blushed. “It’s not that I…..that I don’t like it.”

“No?”

He looked up as Nigel’s face lit up, and smiled back shyly. “I just….I’m not sure I….I want to wear it on my finger.”

“Ah,” Nigel said, nodding, “I get it.”

“I do like it,” he said, “Thank you for….for giving it to me.”

Nigel stood with a sigh, still smiling, and turned to look at him again.

“You’re welcome,” he said, dropping the cigarette down to step on it, “I’m gonna take off, yeah?”

Adam frowned. “Ok.”

“I might stop by this week maybe,” he said, “If you’ll be there.”

“I….I work on….”

“Pretty much every day of the week, Star, I know,” Nigel said, turning back to smile at him, “I know when you work.”

Adam blushed. “Oh.”

Nigel paused, as if he was thinking about something, and then walked up to Adam who froze not sure what to do. He took Adam’s hand, making his heart beat wildly in his chest, and squeezed just once before he smiled again.

“See you later, Adam.”

“S….see you later, Nigel.”

Adam watched Nigel walk all the way to a motorcycle, that he knew he hadn’t heard pull up after he got to Second Adam’s place, and Nigel winked at him once before he took off.

Adam kept touching his hand the entire drive home as he purred.

And when he got home he couldn’t resist masturbating with the same hand, hearing Nigel’s voice in his head again.

‘Thank fuck I’m here, Star. Yeah? No one else can make you feel this good, can they?’

Adam came with a cry, so slick he had to change the sheets after, and when he went to bed that night he pressed his face to his palm - he had not yet washed it though his anxiety over that lost to his instincts - and fell asleep with just the faintest scent of Nigel in his nose.

He woke up early and had to force himself to wash both hands before he had breakfast.

The ride to work felt different, the anticipation that Nigel would come making him not so scared, and when he pulled in he saw everyone’s car but Second Adam’s. He got out, hurried inside, and Grigg rushed over to him with a smile.

“Good morning, Adam.”

“Good morning,” he said, heading to the back, “How are you?”

“Fine. Second Adam…..”

“Is on his heat,” Adam said, blushing, “I know, he told me.”

“Oh,” Grigg said, “He…he usually doesn’t tell anyone but Will when he takes off for it.”

“I…..I know.”

Grigg didn’t say anything else, and Adam didn’t give him more information. It wasn’t his place, and as he went to his desk he was eager to get the day started.

Adam looked up nearly twenty two times in the two hours before Nigel finally came in through the door at ten thirty. He then looked down, hand coming to the ring in his pocket, and before he could say anything Nigel put a box on his desk.

He looked up in surprise as Nigel winked, and then just—--walked out the door.

Adam frowned, confused, and opened the box.

There was a silver chain inside.

Adam purred, taking it out, and heard Lee swear.

“Adam, m—-”

He ignored him, taking out the ring, and put it on the chain then stuffed the whole thing under his shirt.

Adam felt warm all over as he looked up to see Grigg, Will, and Lee there at his desk.

“I need to get to work, you can go,” he said, his face red, “I’m fine.”

They all did just that, and Adam didn’t have to put his hand in his pocket anymore.

Because he could feel the ring, cool against his chest, and that….was so much better.

Chapter 11

The rest of Adam's week went by as usual, though Grigg seemed to be acting rather odd - lurking in the stacks all the time and hovering like he couldn't help himself. He felt better in general, the cool meteorite ring pressed against his chest helped in ways he didn't want to think about, and while he didn't quite know what he wanted in regards to Nigel Adam liked that the alpha had begun to come back to the library again nearly every other day.

He didn't give Adam any other gifts, though Adam kept all of them with him at his desk: the flowers and of course the ring on the chain. None of the others said anything to him about it, even Lee.

Lee didn't seem to like Nigel, and it bothered Adam more than he cared to admit because Lee liked everyone.

Though today Lee wasn't quite himself as he had come in wearing the exact same clothes he had on yesterday and was very on edge.

Adam knew when he canceled Story Hour that something was wrong.

He stopped by the front desk on his way to lunch, and saw Grigg check out a woman and her daughter before he stepped over.

"Is Lee not feeling well?"

Grigg frowned. "I….I dunno, why?"

Adam pointed to a makeshift sign Lee had put up in his own handwriting that said STORY HOUR CANCELED.

“He enjoys story hour,” he said, “So I thought maybe he wasn’t feeling well.”

Grigg nodded. “Yeah, I…..I’ll go talk to him. Thanks, Adam.”

He headed toward the back but stopped as he watched Grigg go up to Lee, who smiled at him in a strange way that didn’t quite reach his eyes. Adam grew anxious as he watched Lee - memories of the previous year where he’d been sluggish and tired before he ended up in the hospital resurfaced - and he hurried to the back with tears in his eyes.

And bumped right into Second Adam.

“Oh!”

Second Adam smiled at him tiredly and looked a lot worse than he usually did after a heat.

“Sorry Addie love,” he yawned, “I’m worn out today I didn’t quite see you.”

Adam frowned. “Are you alright? You…..you were gone for almost six days.”

Second Adam laughed and scratched the back of his neck as his cheeks grew slightly pink.

“It was a rough one, but the knot you brought me—it helped a lot,” he looked at Adam, “Thank you.”

Adam nodded. “You’re welcome. Next time you should be better prepared. You usually are.”

Second Adam sighed and ran a hand across his face. “This week is….it’s not a good one, Addie. Not good at all. My mind’s been on other things.”

“Are you ok?”

He patted Adam’s shoulder. “I’m fine, Addie. It’s just—-not a good week. I’ll be alright,” he leaned in close to Adam and sniffed, “How are you?”

Adam stepped back. “Why are you sniffing me?”

“Just checking. Your heat—-”

He looked away. “I’m not on a heat,” he said, feeling his cheeks heat up, “I’ve been fine for almost two weeks now, Adam.”

“Yes, you have,” he said, “I heard about the….”

“I have to go eat my lunch,” Adam said fast, “Please go back up to the front desk because Grigg left it unattended.”

“Ad—”

Adam nearly ran down the hall, hand coming to his chest as he pressed the ring to his skin, and he was thankful that no one was in the break room when he got inside. He went right to the freezer and got out of his meals, popping it in the microwave, and sat down to start eating as he loaded up his show.

He kept a hand at his chest the whole time, calmer now, and when he was nearly done he looked up to see Lee.

Lee, who was staring at Adam's hand.

He moved it down, blushed, and got up to throw away his empty container.

"I have to get back to my desk," he said softly.

"You still have ten minutes."

"I'm finished, Lee, and…."

Lee grabbed his arm and Adam froze as he looked up. "Alphas aren't always what they seem, Adam. You….you can't fall for the sweetness and expect it *all the time* ok?"

Adam stepped back, biting his lip, and shook his head. "I don't know why you're saying this to me. Please stop."

Lee sighed. "Adam, I just—"

He rushed out of the break room in tears, shaking, and went right to the men's room where he sat in a stall with his head in his hands. Adam sniffled, his mind going right to Nigel's smile, and then he remembered Beth.

Beth had smiled.

Beth—-she'd wanted him to be something he wasn't.

Would Nigel want that too?

Adam bit his lip to keep from crying out but then covered his mouth as he leaned back to stare up at the lights while tears fell down his face. Why did it have to be so hard?

Why did he have to feel so much?

He heard the door open, wiped his cheeks, and took several breaths before he heard a familiar voice. "...and you need to get that shit out *today* , Brother. Not tomorrow, *today.* I've got people breathing down my neck for it."

Adam froze.

Nigel.

It was Nigel.

"Yeah, I know but—-"

He breathed in deeply and let out a long purr before he covered his mouth in surprise.

"I gotta go, Darko. Yeah. Yeah. Shut the fuck up."

Adam heard the sink go, and waited for Nigel to either enter a stall so he could leave or just leave the bathroom all together.

But he walked up to Adam's door and knocked.

"Star?"

He blushed.

“I’m going to the bathroom, Nigel.”

Nigel chuckled. “I don’t think you are, Darling,” he said softly, “I think you were eavesdropping, yeah?”

Adam bit his lip.

“Adam?”

“I didn’t mean to overhear.”

“I’m sure you didn’t, Star, but….you….Adam can I see you?”

Adam stood, shaking, and put his hand on the door but didn’t open it.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea for us to be alone together in the bathroom.”

Nigel sighed. “Adam….”

“Please leave so I can go, Nigel. I have to get back to work.”

Nigel peered in between the door, his eyes making Adam’s heart skip a beat, and he could smell him.

Adam really liked how Nigel smelled.

“You know,” he said softly, pressing his fingers to the crack in the door, “I can just stand here so you’ll talk to me, Star. I could stand here all fucking day.”

Adam stepped back, unable to stop himself from breathing in again, and felt slick start at his backside.

“Why would…..why would you want to do that?”

“You know why, Adam. Yeah?”

Adam swallowed past the sudden dryness in his throat. “Nig—”

The bathroom door opened and he heard a low hiss.

“Adam? Addie are you in there?”

It was Second Adam.

“Y…yes.”

“Get the hell away from the door, *Alpha* ,” Second Adam hissed, “Now.”

“I was just—you know what, fuck it.”

Adam bit back a whimper as Nigel growled and left so fast he didn’t even have time to open the door before he was gone. Second Adam reached out to touch him but Adam stepped away with a hiss of his own.

“I’m a grown man, Adam,” he said, voice shaking, “I don’t need to be saved by….by….by anyone.”

Second Adam sighed, “Addie, Darling, I just….” and reached out again but Adam pushed him back.

“I’m not your *Darling* ,” he said, tears in his eyes, “I….I’m not….why can’t you all just leave me alone?”

Second Adam shook his head. “Addie….”

Adam rushed out, ignoring him, and looked around with a whimper to see Nigel was gone.

Grigg ran over. “Adam? What just happened?”

“Leave me alone, Grigg. I’m fine.”

Grigg stepped back. “Adam…”

He went right to his desk, shaken, and sat down where he pressed his hand tight to his chest to feel the ring there.

It didn’t help much at all, but when Second Adam came out of the men’s room to frown at him his anger returned.

What had Nigel been about to say?

Adam purred as he thought about Nigel just wanting to be with him, just him, and smiled as he started to calm.

He wasn't ready for alpha, he really wasn't, but he wanted to be near Nigel too.

Adam didn't talk to anyone for the rest of his day, his thoughts filled with Nigel's phone call and the aftermath. He told himself that Nigel's words didn't mean he was a drug dealer like the others thought, but it was hard to think of anything else he could've been talking about.

He barely ate his dinner at his last break, thoughts stuck on Nigel's angry growl, and when Lee came up Adam made sure to put on his headphones while he met Lee's eyes.

Lee smirked, shook his head, and went to sit with Grigg who turned to look at him.

Adam liked his friends.

He really did.

But they really needed to stop worrying.

He was a grown man who could make his own mistakes.

And right now, as he pressed his hand to his chest he tried to tell himself what he kept feeling when he was around Nigel wasn't one of them.

Adam went right to his car after they closed, thankful again that no one bothered him, and when he got home he walked up to his door but froze halfway there.

Someone had left a bouquet of roses right outside his door.

He purred, shaking as he started to walk, and leaned down to pick it up only to see a card right stuck in the middle.

The sound of your voice.

The sweetness of your scent.

You, Star.

I'd stay in that damn bathroom forever if it meant I could be near you.

Adam's purr got louder as he smiled, running his fingers over the roses, and he headed inside feeling warm all over.

He put the roses in water but didn't have a vase so he just kept them in a jug he usually put juice inside. The sight of them in the middle of his counter made him blush, and he was suddenly very hungry.

Adam sat there the entire time he ate macaroni with nothing on his phone as he just stared at the roses.

"Nigel."

He was just about to finish when he paused, licked his lips, and thought for a moment.

How had Nigel known where he lived?

Adam's smile faded as he looked at the flowers, and thought for a moment of telling the others about the flowers.

But something told him not to.

He took his last bite and his purr began again, and he just—smiled.

Chapter 12

Just days after Nigel's gift Adam still kept one of the roses pressed in with the others at his desk while the others were at home, and though he'd expected Nigel to come to his desk he hadn't.

He wasn't sure if he was happy for Nigel giving him some space, or sad that he didn't try to be close to Adam again.

Adam had looked at the doorway for the past hour now, waiting for Nigel to come, and though he had other things to do he felt uncomfortable without him around. He sighed as he pulled up the new orders, still using the last of the anonymous donor money the library had gotten months before to fill in the new space themed display and was focused on new titles when a scent hit him.

Alpha.

He looked up to see Duncan standing at his desk holding a rather large pile of books.

His disappointment was palpable. "Hello, Mr. Vizla," he said, "Do you need some help?"

Duncan pushed his glasses up on his face as he smiled.

"Yes, I….I know I can use the self serve computer system but I thought that perhaps you could help me find a book?"

Adam nodded. "Yes, of course. Which?"

"Well, I suppose it's not just *one* book in particular. I've been interested in stargazing as of late. I'm newly retired, and….it's nice to just stop now to….see everything. You understand, I'm sure."

Adam smiled. "Yes, I….I understand. Are you interested in a guide or a detailed—"

"Just a general guide, if you have a recommendation?"

Adam got up, excited for the first time all morning. "Yes, I….if you'll just come with me I…."

"I'll stay here," Duncan said, "I…." he looked down, "I have this pile and I wouldn't want anyone to take them."

"I can keep them behind my desk, if you want?"

"No, no, I…..I'll just….I suppose I can check them out, yes?"

Adam frowned. "You can, but if you'd just give me a minute—"

“I’m rather in a hurry, Adam, and….” he looked around, seeming in search of something, “I wouldn’t want to miss my appointment.”

“Ok,” Adam said, “I’ll meet you up front?”

“Thank you.”

Adam felt odd watching him head for the self checkout but still turned away to go to the section he knew almost by muscle memory. The crowd was thin today, mostly older people, and Adam liked when the library was truly quiet like this. He went right for the book he owned himself, “The Peterson Field Guide to Stars and Planets.” Adam turned to head for the front and saw Grigg watch Duncan walk right out the door.

He walked over, confused, and noticed that Grigg’s eyes were glued to Duncan as he left.

“Where is Duncan going?”

Grigg turned to frown at him. “Duncan?”

Adam nodded and handed him the book. “Yes, he asked me to find this.”

Grigg stared at the book as Adam sighed. “He was very interested in stargazing, or seemed to be.”

Grigg smiled at him. “He probably just forgot.”

“Well, I don’t appreciate my time being wasted. I need to get back to the desk.”

“I’ll keep it behind the desk,” Grigg whispered, staring at the cover still, “Thanks, Adam.”

Adam turned to leave and stopped after he took several steps when he saw Nigel standing by his desk, eyes trained on Adam with such intensity that he had to bite back a purr.

“Nigel’s here again.”

Grigg sighed. “You can go take your break.”

Adam couldn’t look away from Nigel and yet felt almost scared to go to him.

“He...do you think he really wants to court me?”

“Adam, he bought you a seven hundred dollar ring made of meteorite and dinosaur bones. I think he does.”

Adam pressed his hand to his chest then, feeling the ring there, and turned around quickly to head for the break room. He heard Grigg raise his voice as he rushed back, shaken, and since it wasn’t lunch he just sat down with a sigh.

Why had he run? He liked Nigel’s scent, and the gifts he’d given him.

So why was he still so scared?

Adam got up from his chair to pace, biting his lip, and watched the clock get closer to lunch time. He felt better when it did and grabbed the last of his meals from the freezer to put in the microwave along with the last can of pop he had before he sat down with his show.

Routine was something he knew, a safe thing to focus on, and as he mouthed along with the show he tried to feel calm again but kept messing up the lines in his head. He hardly noticed Grigg as he went to restart the Julia Roberts episode of "Inside the Actor's Studio," until Grigg spoke.

"Are you ok?"

Adam's hands shook as he stared at his frozen macaroni and cheese meal, setting his phone down with a sigh.

"Alphas don't usually like me."

Grigg smiled. "Nigel does."

"He smells different."

"Alphas usually do."

Adam shook his head. "Not like this."

Grigg took out his sandwich, chips, and water. Adam grabbed onto his can of pop and took a sip, staring at his phone but he didn't turn it on.

"What does he smell like?"

Adam shook his head, not sure he should say, and sighed. "I don't want to talk about this anymore."

"Ok."

They ate their lunches in relative silence after, which helped, though Adam couldn't focus enough to watch his show.

"You have ten people in the computer class this weekend," Grigg said softly, making Adam frown.

"Hmm. That's not very many. Should we cancel?"

"No," Grigg said, setting down his phone, "There's still a couple days left."

Adam thought about the last class, how it had ended, and frowned.

"The Mixer at the bar is going on at the same time so that's probably why."

"Yeah."

"The last time we had a computer class there were a lot more people interested."

“There wasn’t much learning going on in that class, Adam. It’s fine if there’s a low turn out, especially after the last one was such an alpha fest.”

Adam finished his food and stood up, tossing away his trash. He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “I am going to tell Nigel I’m not interested in a relationship at the moment.”

Grigg smiled. “Is that how you’re gonna put it?”

He frowned. “Is that wrong?”

“No, it’s just….if it’s not at this moment then it would probably be another moment. Right?”

Adam blushed and pressed a hand to his chest. “Oh. Maybe. I do like his scent. He smells...nice. I just don’t think…”

He bit his lip and Grigg put a hand on his shoulder.

“I think it’s a good way to say it.”

Adam nodded once and left the room just as Second Adam came through. He ignored him, still unsure of where they were after Adam had run Nigel out of the bathroom.

He didn’t know why he was still upset by it, but his friends needed to stop thinking he needed to be saved. The rest of the day he made sure to just focus on work, and when he heard someone clear their throat he looked up to see Second Adam standing on the other side of his desk.

“H…hey,” he said.

Adam frowned. “Hello.”

Second Adam sighed. “Look, Addie, I know you’re still pissed at me and….I’m not sorry. I’m not. I just….don’t be mad at me,” he reached over and took Adam’s hand, squeezing, “Please?”

He looked at their hands. “I….I’m….” he sighed, “I don’t like to be babied.”

“I know, love. I promise I won’t do it again, yes? I….next time I’ll let you do whatever you bloody want with Nigel in the men’s room just please don’t be upset with me any longer. You’re one of my dearest friends, Addie. You know?”

Adam nodded. “I know.”

“Are you still angry?”

“I…not as much as I was.”

Second Adam took his hand and kissed it. “That’s good enough for me, Darling!” he said, grinning, “Come on now let’s go get Grigg! He’s hauled up in Will’s office hiding from his boyfriend.”

Adam frowned. “Boyfriend?”

“You know, Duncan.”

He hadn’t realized Grigg liked Duncan, but it made much more sense now that he had been acting so strange. The older alpha was very nice, and Adam thought he and Grigg would make a very nice pair if they got together.

But he knew Grigg hadn’t ever had a relationship in the years he’d known him, and had struggled after losing his last alpha.

Adam wondered what it would be like to lose an alpha.

He teared up at the thought as Second Adam went to lock up after the last library patron left, and he rushed over to Adam again as they walked up to Will’s office door to knock even though it was open. Grigg sat back in Will’s desk, looking very tired but also flushed, and Adam frowned at him while Second Adam just smiled.

“All locked up. Time to clean up the mess? I’ll crank up something good.”

Adam sniffed the air. “You smell like you’re on your heat cycle.”

Grigg blushed and sat upright in the chair. “First of all, no, and second….”

“Maybe it’s a spontaneous heat from your beau,” Second Adam said and wiggled his eyebrows, “So romantic, I could bloody swoon. First Adam has his because of Nigel and now…”

Adam’s eyes widened as he shook his head, blushing deeply as he thought of his last heat. “I didn’t have my heats because of Nigel it was just…I’m not used to…I…”

Grigg threw a pen at Second Adam and shot him a glare. “We know, Adam, we know. Ignore him. Anyway, I didn’t eat much today, I’m sure it’s nothing.”

Adam looked away, frowning, and Second Adam didn’t even notice his discomfort as he went to turn on the overhead music.

Lee came up and poked his head in, now looking much more relaxed. “We gonna clean this dump or what? Drinks are on me whoever wants to go to Omega Night.”

“Well then, let’s get this party started.”

They spent nearly every closing since Roberto had gone back to school like this - cleaning up books and even throwing away food - and while Adam wasn’t a big fan of the music he did like to clean.

And he liked his friends.

He kept a close eye on Grigg as he cleaned, noticing the flush to his cheeks and even his scent. Grigg looked very much like he was close to a heat, and Adam wanted to say

something again but didn't.

The night was over and if he didn't want to be babied by his friends, he was sure Grigg didn't want to be either.

They all were able to persuade him after cleaning was over to go to Omega Night, a free drink event at Hallifan's Pub nearby, and as Adam stepped inside he smelled so many different types of second gender he was overwhelmed.

He sat next to Grigg, wishing he'd just gone home, and as Grigg promised, "Just one drink," they were still there hours later as Adam had many more drinks than he should have, but they were all very sweet.

Adam leaned over to Grigg, feeling fuzzy, and frowned.

"What if I don't like it?"

"Hmm?" Grigg asked, looking just as drunk as Adam felt.

"Mating," Adam mumbled, "What if I don't like it?"

Grigg blinked at him. "Adam, are you---"

"I've never taken a real knot before," Adam confessed, blushing as he sipped his sweet drink, "I might not like it. It's not that I don't like sex, I watch pornography all the time, and I had a girlfriend. I just…"

He was startled when an alpha suddenly was at his back, plastering himself against him, and whimpered at the cloying scent of him.

"I can show you what it's like, pretty thing," he mumbled, leaning in close to his ear, "I got the best knot this side of the---"

He never got to finish his sentence.

A very large alpha came out of nowhere, pulling him away and pushing hard enough to make the alpha stumble and fall.

"It's very rude to act that way around omegas!" the alpha yelled, "Apologize!"

The grabby alpha jumped up and pushed their protector, who then jumped onto him like a crazed maniac. Both Grigg and Adam stood up fast, any drunken calm they had earlier gone in an instant.

Adam watched in shock as their protector, a curly haired alpha in a rumpled tan suit with a mustache began to beat the other alpha till the bouncer at the door pulled him back.

There was a small cut above the curly haired alpha's left swollen eye and his mouth was red. He yelled at the other alpha again even as he was dragged off and Adam was shaking as Grigg yelled out, "Thank you!" when the curly haired alpha got thrown outside.

The other alpha who'd grabbed at Adam sneered and spit at their feet even as the bouncer returned with a gesture for him to leave as well.

"Fucking cocktease here started it!" he yelled, "Omega cocktease right here!"

He pointed at Adam who frowned, suddenly in tears and looking everywhere but knew who he wanted to see wasn't here. "I want to go home."

"Yeah, me too," Grigg said, "I…."

"Who was that?" Second Adam said, falling against the bar's edge, "He's a few years shy of a decent wardrobe."

"Who cares?" Grigg mumbled, "I'm gonna call for a ride. You about ready to go?"

Second Adam sighed. "Fine. I'll go see if Lee closed his asshole yet."

Grigg pulled out his phone and Adam stayed closer to him, still shaken as he tried to calm down.

"We could sleep at Lee's," Grigg said, as they made their way up to the door.

"I want my bed."

"Alright, Adam."

They waited outside and were soon joined by Lee and Second Adam who now both sported rather large hickies by their mating glands. "Fighting fire there, guys?"

"Pfft," Lee laughed, "Any alpha who even thinks about biting me I'll cut off his cock."

Adam kept looking around, hopeful, but didn't see Nigel anywhere.

Why did he want to see Nigel so badly?

The car pulled up was just barely big enough to fit them, but Grigg sat in the back with the two Adams just as Lee opened the door to sit up front.

"C'mon love," Second Adam said, gently taking Adam's arm, "Come sit with me."

"Oh fuck no."

Adam laid his head against the window, still watching, and saw many motorcycles go by.

But none of them were Nigel's.

He heard the others speak, but it felt muffled as the liquor made things fuzzy again, and when the car began to move he sighed.

Adam hardly paid attention most of the ride till Grigg shook him. "You're home Adam."

He sighed, undid his seatbelt, and nodded before he stepped out.

The air was warm as he headed for his door, and he heard the car pull away as he got to his door, hand pressed against his chest, and he dragged himself up the stairs in tears.

Adam locked his door with difficulty, and went right to his bedroom where he changed with the same problems but finally was in bed by three so exhausted he hardly remembered falling asleep.

But he kept his hand up under his shirt and pressed to the ring on his neck all night long.

Chapter 13

Adam woke early the next morning, though his head hurt slightly he tried to ignore it, and walked outside ready to get to work before he realized he didn't have his car.

His panic was immediate, and he thought about calling Grigg for a ride when he remembered they'd all gotten rides home from Omega Night.

He'd have to use the Ridr app.

Adam blinked back tears as he opened the app, ready to go back inside his building, when he froze.

His car was in the parking lot.

The car he definitely did *not* drive home last night.

Adam walked over to his car slowly, confused, and peered inside.

There was a note on the driver's seat.

He used his keychain, shaking as he opened the door, and grabbed the note as he sat down.

Can't have you late for work, Star, can we?

Adam's heart began to beat wildly in his chest as he let out a long purr, biting his lip.

He should be upset.

Nigel had broken into his car and driven it here.

There was no other way he could've gotten it to Adam's apartment.

He pressed a hand to his ring where it lay against his skin and blushed as he folded the note before putting it into his coat pocket. The others would tell him to call the police, he knew that. This wasn't supposed to make him feel good, and yet he wiggled in the seat as he breathed in deeply hoping to catch the last bits of Nigel's scent.

He didn't smell him.

Adam frowned as he called Grigg, knowing that he'd been very distracted last night and might need a ride.

No answer.

He called again and put his phone on the holder before he pulled out of the parking lot. It was still early enough he could go to Grigg's house and see if he needed a ride today. The detour would be a nice distraction from thinking about Nigel.

Adam felt slick form at his backside just thinking about Nigel sitting in his car and gripped the steering wheel tightly as he drove.

He didn't want Grigg to smell his excitement if he did ride to work with him today, and yet he couldn't help himself. Adam purred as he drove, thinking more about Nigel worrying about him getting to work today, and he was so distracted that he didn't even notice he'd gotten to Grigg's house without even trying.

Adam parked, calling again, and waited.

If Grigg really was on his heat, as he'd smelled so close last night, he was probably so deep into it he didn't even hear the phone.

He sighed as he considered just leaving, but called one more time.

Grigg finally answered this time on the third ring.

"Waa?"

Adam frowned. "Are you coming down? I can take you to work."

He heard Grigg swear on the other end of the line. "I'm not dressed yet."

"I don't want to be late so I will go without you. If you have your heat please call ahead of time to let Will know. He would be very upset if there was another Valentine's Day incident."

Adam blushed as he thought about the Valentine's Day incident. It was the first and only time Adam had ever seen an omega with two alphas live and in person. He wiggled in his seat again as he gripped the steering wheel tightly.

"Gr—"

"I'm not on my heat! I'll be right down!"

Grigg ended the call and Adam sighed as he tried to calm down. It wasn't like him to be so affected by an alpha, not even Beth, and it bothered him.

What did it mean?

The sound of Grigg yelling out made him turn to see the other omega running across the grass to his car. He slid into the passenger seat, his scent half sweat and very much a pre-heat. Grigg was flushed, his skin taking on a sheer sheen that was very heat-like, and he didn't look like himself.

"You should've called off," Adam said, as he watched Grigg put on his seatbelt, "You don't look very good."

Grigg didn't say a word, even as Adam waited for a minute, and he pulled away from the curb still worried.

It wasn't like Grigg to be so reckless.

Just like it hadn't been like Second Adam to be so unprepared for his heat.

Or Adam himself.

What was happening to all of them?

Adam tried not to let his upset show as he drove them to work, and then couldn't help but start to hum. It calmed him, just the dull sound, and as they got closer to work he hoped Nigel would come see him again today.

He wanted to thank him.

Adam smelled Grigg's heat get worse as they drove, but didn't look at him, and when they parked he frowned at him when Grigg didn't even seem to notice.

"You're sure you're not on a heat? Because you smell like you are."

Grigg undid his seatbelt and grumbled. "As I've said, I take suppressants and am not—" he got out of the car, and Adam hurried to do the same, "—on my heat. Thank you for the ride."

He ran away, leaving Adam to just watch him with concern, and as he got close to the door he heard Lee call out to him.

"Good morning Adam!"

Adam stopped to look at him. "Good morning," he said, forcing himself to smile.

Lee frowned. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing."

"Adam….I know your upset face, alright? What's wrong?"

Adam blushed. "It's….it's not my place to say."

"What…."

Adam pushed past Lee inside, heading to the back as he followed Grigg's scent alone, and saw Grigg standing by the coffee machine but he did not move to make coffee.

He hardly heard Lee until he spoke.

"Good morning everyone."

Adam didn't look at him, just Grigg, and Lee walked right up to Grigg to put a hand on his shoulder.

"I hate to break it to you Griggy, but you definitely smell fertile."

He saw Grigg's instant anger at whatever Lee whispered to him, and went to make sure he still had a frozen dinner for lunch as Will's scent filled the room.

His angry scent.

"Why the hell...dammit I thought you were smarter than this! Do you not remember what happened when Second Adam was stupid enough to—"

Adam stepped back, eyes wide as Grigg just glared at Will, and Second Adam interrupted him.

"Hey, hey, now! I wasn't stupid I honestly thought those special emergency suppressants were decent! Grigg here is coming in ready to blow and without any reason. I think he's way more stupid than I was."

Grigg grinded his teeth. "I'm not on my heat it's still weeks away! I—"

Will stomped over to the table, set down his lunch bag, and came up to Grigg. The effect was immediate. Grigg moaned and buried his face into the alpha's neck. He stepped back, looking upset, and Adam didn't know what to do or say.

"I didn't...I'm sorry. I'll go home."

Will sighed. "When I made the choice to hire you all here at the same time it came with provisos. Number one will always be : keep track of your heats or take high grade suppressants. I don't care that you might be off for a few days. Just...I don't need another orgy in the stacks. Okay?"

"It wasn't an orgy," Second Adam said, "Technically it was only two alphas so that makes it a threesome!"

Grigg and Will both laughed. "I stand corrected."

"I'll just," Grigg sighed, "I'm gonna go. God, I'm so embarrassed."

"Heats are natural things," Lee said softly, coming up to hug Grigg him from behind, "Don't worry, sweetheart. I just hope you have a decent knot and plenty of food at home."

"I'll be fine."

Lee kissed his cheek. "I'll come by and check on you."

Adam was grateful when Grigg was gone, though Will turned to him, Lee, and Second Adam.

"Never again," he said, "I'm serious."

Second Adam got up, tossing the remains of his pop tart into the garbage, and came up to Will with a grin. "Yes, Dad."

“Adam, I swear to—”

Lee laughed. “I’m gonna go walk Grigg out.”

The minute they were both gone and it was just Adam and Will he sighed.

“I told him last night he was probably close to a heat, Will,” he frowned, “We all did. I don’t know what he wouldn’t listen to anyone.”

Will sighed as he ran a hand over his face. “It’s fine, Adam. I….I knew what I was getting into when I—”

“SOMEONE GET OUT HERE!”

Will turned, nostrils flaring, and ran out of the break room as Adam followed. Fear overtook him as he ran through the first set of doors, frozen when he saw Duncan.

The alpha had apparently come in early and found Grigg leaving, judging by the way he had to be pulled back by Will as Grigg got to his car. Adam didn’t move, putting a hand against his chest to feel his ring, and when he saw the two alphas suddenly start to fight he stepped back when Duncan punched Will in the face.

“GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!” Will yelled.

Duncan growled as he took off, dropping all the books in his hands, and Lee picked them up as Will just watched the other alpha. Adam didn’t even notice Second Adam was coming close to the door until he was right in his face. He frowned at him.

“You alright, Addie?”

Adam blushed as he turned away. “Y…yes,” he said as he walked inside, “I just….I didn’t expect that.”

Second Adam laughed. “None of us did, Darling. Too bad for Grigg that Lee called out for help, eh?”

Adam nodded as Second Adam followed him to the computer desk, hand still at his chest the whole time.

“Adam?”

He blinked.

“I….I’m sorry, did you say something?”

Second Adam frowned at him. “I asked you how you got in today, Addie. I know we all left our cars other than Lee. I took one of those Ridr rides, but sadly did not get that adorable alpha Lee hated so much.”

Adam blushed as he walked around his desk.

“Addie, how….”

“Yes, I got a ride,” he lied, hating it, “Grigg and I did.”

“Ah.”

He took Nigel’s note out of his pocket and put it with the flowers in the book he had them all inside.

“Did you need something, Adam?” he asked, not looking up, “Because I have work to do.”

“I….oh no, it’s nothing. I’ll see you at break?”

“Yes.”

Adam was thankful when he left and sat down with a sigh.

It wasn’t like him to lie to his friends.

He felt his chest tighten as he turned on the computer, biting his lip, and got lost in setting up for computer class. It was days away, and really wasn’t hard at all, but it was a good distraction.

That was until Will came to his desk an hour later.

The library had been quiet by then, not even a single person at his area and when Will coughed he realized he hadn’t noticed him.

“Oh, I….” he blushed, “I’m sorry. I didn’t know you were here.”

Will frowned. “You ok, Adam? Because if you think you’re….”

“I’m not on my heat, Will,” he said, “I promise you I’m not.”

Will sighed as he leaned against Adam’s desk. “Good,” he said, looking out at the library patrons, “I….I came to talk to you about something. I’m not sure if you’ve heard.”

Adam frowned. “Heard what?”

“I’m hiring a guard.”

Adam blinked. “Because of what happened today?

Will sighed. “No, I….with what happened the last few weeks - with Nigel and with your….”

Adam looked down. “Nigel wouldn’t hurt me, Will,” he snapped, “I don’t need a guard. I….”

“I already have interviews coming in soon,” Will said, “I just thought I’d tell you about it. It’s not today, but….”

“If you already made up your mind, Will, then I don’t know why you’re telling me now.”

“Adam, usually you know things before any of the others. I honestly thought you knew. I put it up on the site days ago.”

He blushed as he pulled up the library site and saw for the first time since Second Adam was hired the Jobs link was lit. Adam didn’t bother clicking on it.

“I just didn’t notice it,” he said, “I’ve….it’s been a busy few days.”

Will sighed. “Yeah,” he said softly, rubbing his eye, “I—”

Adam smelled Will’s scent change and looked up to see Hannibal Lecter was across the room looking at them. He didn’t really know if he liked the other omega, but it was obvious that Hannibal was attracted to Will.

“You should talk to him.”

Will scoffed as he shook his head. “I’ve got enough problems. I’ll see you later, Adam.”

“But—”

He watched Will walk off and not even turn to look at the omega who seemed to like bothering him so much the last few years. Hannibal looked upset at the slight, turning away, and Adam wondered if maybe he’d give up on Will soon.

Adam found himself staring at the library home page once again as he thought about having another alpha come work here.

Maybe it wouldn’t be so bad?

“Mister?”

Adam looked up to see a young boy at his desk. “Um, yes?”

The boy pointed at the computers. “I need help.”

“Oh, I….yes, of course.”

He walked over, leaned down, and the boy pointed at the screen. “I wanna see Minecraft.”

Adam frowned. “You only get an hour,” he said, looking at the card in the machine, “Your card only has an hour.”

“I wanna see Minecraft!”

Adam flinched, opening up the page, and the kid kicked his leg making him whimper.

“I WANNA SEE….”

All at once the chair as pulled back with a growl and Nigel was there. Adam stared up at him as Nigel all but hissed at the kid, pulling out his card, and the boy ran off yelling, “MOM!”

“You shouldn’t have done that.”

Nigel scoffed. “Little shit,” he mumbled, looking at Adam as he pushed in the chair, “You alright?”

Adam nodded. “I….thank you,” he said softly, “For bringing my…”

“WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY BOY?”

He stepped back as a beta woman came up to Nigel, who just growled in her face as he heard Will’s door burst open.

“YOUR LITTLE BRAT WAS ABUSING THE STAFF, LADY!”

“Marvin is an ang—”

“What’s going on here?” Will growled, “Ma’am is this alpha bothering you?”

Adam bit his lip, shaking, and Nigel looked at him.

He knew he should defend him.

Explain what happened.

But Nigel just smirked, turning back to Will, and growled at the beta.

“This *alpha* is leaving,” he said, “And you’d better tell this woman’s *brat* to stop picking on your staff. I won’t always be here, yeah?”

Will looked at Adam, who hurried to his desk, and looked back as Nigel left. He didn’t look up as he heard the woman drag her son away, and when Will came to his desk he whimpered.

“Adam? Did something happen?”

Tears filled his eyes. “I should’ve…..Nigel was helping me.”

Will sighed. “You should’ve told me that.”

He sniffled. “I know,” he said, “I….my leg hurts, and I…..” he looked up at Will, “Do you think he’ll be mad at me?”

Will smiled. “No,” he said, shaking his head, “He won’t be mad.”

He reached for a tissue and wiped at his eyes.

“Thank you, Will.”

“If you wanna go on a break, I can send Second Adam over or just shut down for a while?”

Adam sighed. “No, I’m fine.”

“Alright.”

Adam looked at the doorway for the rest of the day while he ignored the group chat he had with the others.

And also the mass text group between all four of them and Grigg’s sisters.

He hardly remembered lunch, or even dinner, and when he got home he couldn’t help but wonder if Nigel would be waiting for him.

His disappointment at finding no Nigel, not even a note, at his door, made Adam sadder than it should.

He texted Grigg.

I hope you’re having a calm heat.

Adam picked at his food, still agitated, and when he finally fell asleep he had a dream about Nigel.

He was in heat in the dream, and Nigel was holding him down as he sucked on his neck. Adam felt like his skin was on fire, desperate to be knotted, and Nigel’s voice made him gush more slick than he ever had before.

“So wet for me, Star,” he whispered, “You smell so damn good, Darling. Adam….”

Adam woke up to a mess on his sheets, blushing, and realized he’d had a wet dream.

He took a shower, still dazed, and had only toast for breakfast before he headed to work.

And tried not to feel another stab of disappointment that there was no note on the seat of his car.

He had work to do.

Chapter 14

The next few days with Grigg gone were calm, though Adam again worried when Nigel didn't return.

He had no hold over Nigel, he knew, but every morning since the first he went to his car hoping to see a note but found none. It was getting to be a problem, especially the closer they got to the next computer class, and as he went into work that day he wished Grigg were there.

It wasn't like he didn't talk to the others, but Grigg usually didn't push or tell him bad things about Nigel like Lee and Adam did.

Adam sighed as he watched the computer area, checking the system every once in a while for people attempting to look up pornography. They wouldn't get around his filters, no one ever had, but he always put their names in a separate file for later.

Just in case.

He was so focused he didn't notice anyone coming to the computers, though when he saw a pop-up of 'new login' on his screen he clicked and his heart skipped a beat as he looked up.

Nigel.

Nigel didn't look at him, which made Adam's stomach hurt, but he couldn't look away from the alpha after not seeing him for the last few days. He looked well, though his clothes were a bit rumpled, and he was tapping his foot on the ground at what he saw on his screen. Adam wanted to look, but found himself worried as to what he might see, so he just exited out of the computer program to check on intakes.

That was when Beth arrived.

Adam smelled her familiar scent immediately and couldn't help but look up as she came over looking oddly flustered.

"Adam," she said, smiling, "You're looking at me again that's good news."

"Beth—"

She leaned in closer, and Adam put his hand over his chest to feel the ring there but it did little to hide his anxiety.

"I know you said you don't want to get back together after what I did, but….you remember how *good* it was? Remember—"

Adam blushed, biting his lip, and suddenly Second Adam's voice cut through his fear.

"Hey!" he hissed, rushing up to grab Beth as he whispered, "I *know* we told you not to come here anymore, *Alpha* . You know, it's against the law to stalk innocent—"

“It’s fine, Adam,” he said, “She’s not….she’s gonna go.”

Beth sighed. “I just wanted to talk to him,I….I just wanted to apologize and say I made a mistake,” she grabbed Adam’s hand on the desk, and he tried to pull away but she held tight, “I know you remember how good…”

“Get the *fuck* out of here,” Second Adam hissed in her ear, “Right the bloody fuck now.”

Beth pushed away from him with a growl and Adam watched her go unable to feel comfortable again until she was gone.

Though when he turned to look at Nigel he found the glare he got even worse than the unwanted attention from Beth. Nigel looked very upset as he stood up, slamming his chair, and took off in almost a run as Adam whimpered.

“Addie….you can go after him?”

Adam shook his head. “No, no, I….I need to stay at work,” he said, his voice shaking, “I….I have to….”

Second Adam put a hand on his. “What you *have* to do is get a protective disorder against that bitch,” he hissed, “She won’t leave you alone if you don’t.”

“She’d never hurt me.”

“No, but she could force you to do something you don’t want to do.”

Adam pulled his hand back as the thought made him sick. “I….I need….”

He ran to the bathroom and vomited in the toilet, shaking as tears fell down his face.

Why wouldn’t Beth leave him alone? She wasn’t his alpha and she’d broken up with him.

He stood up on shaking legs, whimpering, and made his way to the sink where he tried to wash his mouth out but found the taste still there even after spitting three times. Adam looked at himself in the mirror and had to look away fast.

Adam put a hand to his chest, pressing down, and then walked out the door only to see Second Adam waiting. “You ok, Addie?”

He nodded. “Yes.”

“You look like you aren’t.”

Tears filled his eyes. “I need to go back to work.”

“Take a break.”

“I….”

“Take….a damn break, love. Will won’t mind, and the computers are fine without you for a bit.”

Adam nodded and didn’t look at Second Adam again as he went to the back, thankful no one was there. The night was almost over, only a few more hours to go, and yet it felt like a lifetime.

He found one of Second Adam’s popsicles, sucking on it as he tried to calm down, and couldn’t get the look on Nigel’s face out of his head. Adam sat at the table in tears, pulled out his phone, and watched one of his programs but it didn’t help.

“ *Alpha.* ”

“Adam?”

Adam jumped as he turned to see Will in the doorway. “Oh, I….I didn’t know anyone came in.”

“Are you alright?”

“I’m fine,” he lied, “I just….”

“I heard she came back,” Will said, “I know it’s not my place to say, but—-”

“Then please don’t.”

Will sighed. “We just want what’s best for you, Adam.”

“I’m not a child,” Adam said, biting the popsicle.

“I know, Adam, I know.”

Adam looked down as he took the last bite. “I’m gonna go back to my desk now.”

“Ok.”

He came back out and saw Lee looking around frantically. “Lee?”

“Where’s Will? Is he back there?”

“Yes, what’s wrong.”

“Grigg needs us,” he said, his voice tight, “Something’s wrong.”

Adam frowned. “We can’t leave yet, it’s….there’s still an hour…”

“I don’t give a shit,” Lee hissed, running down toward the break room.

Adam looked around and saw Second Adam at his desk across the way, walking over to him as a child did the same. He came around the back of the desk as Second Adam finished telling the little boy how to find something online and then heard him sigh.

“Every day I work here is another day I know I never want to have kids.”

Adam frowned. “You say that now but—”

Second Adam turned to him. “No, Addie, I *know* I don’t want kids. Just the thought…” he shuddered, “No, no, that’s not for me. You ready to come back here then?”

“Yes, but—Lee says something’s wrong with Grigg. Did he tell you what’s going on?”

Second Adam blinked. “What?”

“He ran back to tell Will we have to leave, and I told him the library doesn’t close for another hour so we can’t.”

Second Adam got up with a sigh. “Well, it has been three days, maybe Grigg did something stupid like let a strange alpha into his place or something during his heat and he’s having a scare.”

“No, I don’t think—”

“We’re leaving!”

They both turned to see Lee walking up to them.

“What are you talking about now?” Second Adam asked.

“Will says we can go,” he said, “He’ll run the desk and close off the other areas. Grigg called me and he’s hysterical.”

“So why do we have to go then?”

Lee glared at him. “Because Grigg is our friend, and he’d go for us? How about that?”

Adam frowned. “But the people on the computers—”

The loud speakers came on for the first time in what Adam thought was forever: “Attention: the computer lab will be closing for monthly maintenance in ten minutes. You will be refunded your time today. Sorry for the inconvenience.”

Lee smirked. “See? C’mon.”

Adam shut down his place, shoving everything he’d brought today into his bag before he followed Lee. Second Adam sighed and went to the front desk where Will already was, and Adam spotted Hannibal Lecter lingering near the front area where he hadn’t been before.

They locked eyes for a minute and the other omega looked away as they left for Lee’s car.

“I can take my own—”

“Adam, we’ll come back, it's fine!”

He sighed as he walked to Lee's car, only to pause when he felt eyes on him and turned to see Nigel.

"Oh," Second Adam said, "Lee…."

Lee grabbed Adam's arm as all three of them watched him just stare at them, and the cold look he gave Adam made Adam whine.

"Oh, fuck off!" Lee said, dragging him to Lee's car, "Adam, you don't need this shit."

Adam looked back, tears in his eyes, as they drove away, and it even worry about Grigg wouldn't make it hurt any less how Nigel had looked so angry.

They found Grigg in the park near the fountain, shaking and in tears as Lee rushed up to hug him.

"Come on, Griggy," he said, making Adam frown at how upset Grigg seemed.

"What happened?"

"We'll talk about it in the car, Adam," Lee said, "Just let's go."

Adam didn't ask again, even as Grigg got into the seat beside him and laid on his shoulder in tears. He smelled like slick, and oddly a bit of urine.

Grigg whimpered, and Adam pulled him in closer as he nuzzled his head as tears filled his eyes.

"We're going to the bar."

"I don't think that's a good idea."

"Well, we're going."

"Are you gonna tell me or Addie what the fuck is going on here?" Second Adam hissed.

Lee sighed.

"Grigg saw Duncan," he said, something Adam guessed already, "And…Duncan beat someone up for him and he…."

He liked it.

Adam didn't say it out loud, but he knew that was what Lee would say, and Grigg sniffled.

"Well, that should be a good thing, yeah?" Second Adam asked, "Grigg's silver alpha fighting and defending his honor?"

"He was almost…."

Adam hissed. "Was he hurt bad?" he asked Grigg.

“He broke his arm.”

“Oh….I’m sure that was a fun thing to see.”

Adam whined, thinking about Nigel suddenly, and Grigg sniffled.

“Adam?”

“I’m fine.”

The others didn’t say anything, and he had to keep forcing himself not to whine as they got to the bar. He didn’t even want to be here, but couldn’t leave now so he just sat next to Grigg who seemed not any better.

Second Adam ordered them both Sweet Omegas, and Adam nursed his most of the night though Grigg had way too many.

But oddly enough Second Adam and Lee only left them briefly a few times but stayed most of it.

It was different, all four of them together, and as his friends got more inebriated, he started to think about Nigel again. What had seeing Beth made him think?

Adam wanted to tell him she was bothering him, that it meant nothing, but he wasn’t sure Nigel would believe him.

He tried not to get distressed, sipping his Sweet Omega and letting the sweet taste distract him, but it was hard.

“It was quite odd,” Second Adam said, “He seemed a bit down, for him anyway, and it took all I had to keep Adam from---”

“I wasn’t gonna do anything,” Adam mumbled, taking another sip.

“You whined the whole way here, Addie,” Second Adam said, wrapping an arm around him.

He frowned. “No, I didn’t.”

Second Adam kissed his cheek. “Alright, love. You didn’t.”

The rest of the night he felt like he was in a haze, the bar filled with strangers while the four of them just sat together, and when he finally convinced everyone to leave he ended up driving Lee’s car to his house.

It wasn’t ideal, staying there, but Adam had no choice.

He wasn’t about to leave his friends like this.

Adam barely slept that night, nightmares filling his dreams where Nigel told him, ‘You’re not worth this hassle!’ and stole the ring from his neck. Second Adam’s snoring didn’t help much

either, and he barely remembered falling asleep.

He woke up like clockwork at seven and made coffee for himself and everyone while he was happy to see his favorite cereal in Lee's cabinet, so he ate that first before he heard everyone talking.

"...calling in sick!"

"Good morning."

Grigg and Lee were both awake and turned to look at him.

"You stayed?" they both asked at once.

"No one was sober enough to drive me home," Adam murmured, coming toward the bed, "And I don't like to take Ridr that late at night. I had trouble falling asleep but mostly because of Second Adam snoring so loudly."

"I do not snore," came a tired mumble from Second Adam behind him, taking one of the coffees in Adam's hand, "You are just very particular, though I have to say the moaning did help me sleep very well."

Second Adam flopped onto Grigg's bed as Adam frowned at all three of them.

"I don't moan in my sleep."

"Must have been my very active imagination," Second Adam said, sipping his coffee, "Though I don't think I'd imagine you saying Nigel that many times."

Adam blushed, frowning, "I need to go home and change."

"We all need to change," Grigg sighed, "I have clothes here if you---"

"I want my clothes," Adam said, "I need my clothes."

Second Adam yawned, standing up in a stretch. "I'll take you, Addie. Just give me a moment."

Adam turned and headed down the hall, leaving them alone again.

He blushed, thinking that Second Adam had heard him during his nightmares, and went to get dressed in his clothes from last night. He'd worn just his undershirt to bed and boxer shorts, so it didn't take long.

"You alright?"

Adam turned to see Second Adam standing there sipping coffee.

"I'm fine."

"You look like you slept as bad as the rest of us."

He blushed. “I had nightmares.”

“Ah,” he said, sitting on the bed, “That explains it. Nigel?”

Adam nodded.

They were both quiet.

“Addie…”

“I want to get home and change so can we go soon?”

Second Adam smiled at him tiredly. “Yes, Darling. Just give me a minute?”

Adam left him, heading to the kitchen, and paused as he heard Lee and Grigg.

“.....mate.”

“True mates are an old omega’s tale,” Grigg laughed, “Why would you even believe in something like that?”

“Grigg, c’mon. You know that’s not true.”

Adam put a hand against his chest, feeling Nigel’s ring, and tears filled his eyes.

“Ok, so what if it’s true?” Grigg hissed, “That doesn’t mean that’s what this is, Lee. That….no one wants me, or has *ever* wanted me. Why would….”

Adam stepped into the kitchen and both of them turned.

“We’re gonna go soon.”

Grigg wiped his eyes. “Thank you for….I’m sorry if we messed up your schedule,” he sighed, “I know you like things…the same. Thank you for coming last night, Adam.”

Adam nodded. “You’re my friend, Grigg, why wouldn’t I?”

Grigg smiled. “I don’t know, I just…” he shook his head, “I’m gonna thank you anyway.”

“Ready to go?”

“Are you taking my car?”

“Nope.”

“You drove here *with* us. How do you even have your car?”

Second Adam grinned. “Wouldn’t you like to know? C’mon Addie.”

Adam frowned as they left, following him out, and when they got outside there was Second Adam’s car. “How did your car get here?”

“I have a lot of friends, Addie,” he said, as Adam slipped in the passenger’s side, “And they like to make me happy.”

It wasn’t much of an explanation, but all he knew he was gonna get, and when Second Adam dropped him off not long after he didn’t really care all that much anymore. He got dressed, suddenly thinking about Nigel again, and drove to work early only to realize that today was the alpha interview day.

He sighed.

It was gonna be a long day.

Chapter 15

Adam came out as they headed for the door, still looking sour, and Grigg took his hand when they left. “You ok?”

Adam didn’t say much as Second Adam drove him home, and he found himself growing more anxious as he got dressed.

Today was alpha day.

He had no desire to ogle the alphas like the others did, his thoughts on one alpha and one alpha alone.

Was Nigel still mad at him?

Adam was in tears when he got to his car but found no note and pulled out of the parking lot not quite happy to be going to work at all. His routine felt warped sleeping somewhere that wasn’t in his own bed, and when he finally got to the library he wasn’t sure if he was happy or upset that Second Adam had already beat him there.

He walked in and Second Adam said something but he hardly paid attention, heading to his desk to start all the computers up. Adam put a hand to his ring where it always lay, still on edge, and sat down.

Adam kept his eyes on the screen, checking the system, and didn’t even look up until he heard, “There you two are!” and looked up to see Grigg and Lee coming inside.

He looked at the clock and saw almost thirty minutes had passed.

Adam bit his lip.

That couldn’t be right.

He got up fast to find out what was going on and caught, “....new books. We hardly ever get books like this.”

Grigg looked upset, and Adam just wanted to leave while Lee just seemed to be staring at the door.

Grigg sighed. “I’ll do it.”

“Can I do it?” Adam asked, making them all turn.

Will frowned at him. “Adam, I need you at the desk.”

Adam frowned. “I don’t want to be around all these strange alphas, Will. I don’t...the scent...please let me do it. Grigg is very good at computers too.”

Grigg put a hand on his shoulder. “I can do the computer desk today,” he said, “Let Adam sit in the back.”

Will frowned. “I guess that’s fine. But I need you , he pointed at Second Adam, “At the main desk and Lee…”

Adam didn’t wait to hear the rest, heading to the back where he thankfully didn’t have to smell anything. He saw all the boxes, excited to start, and began to separate things into a system.

It was nice, keeping him occupied, and he didn’t once have to stop to touch the ring at his neck.

He loved work like this, just adding and sorting, and only stopped to get a drink of water twice before the text messages started.

Lee: I get first dibs on the old one. He’s kinda ugly but it’s growing on me.

Me: Go right ahead.

Second Adam: He’s all yours.

Adam: I’m busy, please go back to work.

He went to the break room to get a snack after two hours passed and came back just as his cell phone buzzed.

Me: Adam, Nigel was just here.

Adam barely back a whimper as he typed.

Adam: Nigel? Did he ask about me?

Second Adam: He looked like someone kicked him in the balls, the poor thing. That alpha’s crazy about you, Addie.

Lee: I didn’t see him!

Adam sat down on the floor with a sigh as tears filled his eyes.

Adam: What did he say?

Grigg: He thought Beth was courting you. I tried to tell him she wasn’t and stop him from going but he took off.

Second Adam: Shit. I can go get him?

He felt a tear fall down his cheek as he typed.

Adam: It’s ok. Will doesn’t want you to leave the desk.

Second Adam: Addie…

Adam put a hand to his ring and pressed down hard as he whined.

Nigel would stop being nice to him now, he was sure of it. Alphas didn't like to have to deal with so much, and Adam had pushed him away for too long.

He was so upset after that he kept messing up, his system too much, and he tried to calm down while eating his granola bar. No one would come back here now because it was so busy so he wasn't upset he'd get caught doing nothing. Adam stacked books while he ate, which helped, and soon he was back on track again.

Then another series of texts came just before he could leave for lunch.

Lee: Grigg, if you don't go over there I'm gonna steal that old man for myself.

Adam: Is he back? Grigg is Duncan back?

Me: Drop it, Lee.

Lee: You stupid idiot.

Second Adam: He's coming toward you.

Adam tried to be happy for Grigg, really, but the jealousy stung as he neatly stacked the discards. It wasn't fair to be upset with Grigg because he dealt with people better. Some people just struggled more than others.

He ignored his cell phone for the next several hours, noticing as it got closer to dinner, and hoped that maybe after that the alphas would be gone so he could return to his desk.

Nigel might return and he could then tell him everything about Beth.

Adam was happier at the thought and headed out to the break room which was surprisingly empty when he opened the freezer. He put his meal inside the microwave and looked at the door waiting to see if anyone would come.

No one did.

He frowned as he sat down, eating quietly, and opened his phone to watch his show.

Adam bristled when he went back to the main area and smelled alpha scent still in the air that bothered him enough that he headed back to the books.

This would be fine.

He could explain things to Nigel later maybe.

Adam only got about thirty more minutes in when Lee came in out of nowhere.

"Lee?"

“Adam, Grigg needs to….he’s having a rough time. Can you switch back?”

Adam nodded as he stood up, no longer caring about the scents. “Yes, I…I can do that. I want to explain my system if I can? Where….”

“I think Will got him back into the break room.”

“Ok, thank you.”

Adam headed back and down the hall to the break room where Grigg and Will sat talking.

“Grigg?”

They both turned to Adam. “Lee said you were going in the back to finish up the intake, is that right?”

“Yeah, Addie, if that’s ok with you.”

Adam nodded. “Can I show you my system?”

“Sure.”

They turned to go and Adam was startled when Will yelled, “And stay out!”

Grigg looked back to smile, shaking his head, and Adam led him toward the other back area.

“What was that about?”

“Will was just being an ass.”

“Oh.”

“How are you holding up?”

Adam didn’t quite know what to say so he didn’t answer him as they walked into the room.

“Oh wow, you’re almost done.”

“Yes, I’ve separated everything into genres and sections. There’s also a very large pile of discards, which will need to be thrown away or I’m sure Will would let us take them.”

Grigg smiled. “I’m sure he would. What was your criteria?”

“Writing in the books, damage, that kind of thing.”

“I see.”

“And I’ve started to print the stickers up in front so if you need me to bring them let me know.”

“Okay.”

They stood there silently and Adam couldn't help but let the thoughts he'd had earlier return. He sighed as he looked back at the door. "Adam?"

"Do you think he might come back?"

"Who?"

He looked at Grigg. "Nigel."

"Oh, I...I don't know."

Adam's face fell. "Oh."

"I mean, they told me he came to your last computer class? Maybe he'll come this week?"

He smiled a little. "Maybe."

Grigg patted his shoulder. "It sucks sometimes to be an omega."

Adam nodded. "I just wish I...dealt with it easier."

"Addie…"

"Beth didn't like me because I was different, and Nigel...he doesn't really know all that much about me. What if…"

Grigg suddenly hugged him, tears in his eyes, and Adam hugged him back. "I think...Nigel wants to know you. Much more than Beth ever did. That's something to clutch onto, you know?"

Adam sniffled. "You think so?"

"Yeah, Adam, I do."

He stepped back, standing straight, and nodded. "Thank you, Grigg. I will...leave you to this. Have a good day."

"Thanks Adam."

Adam left him in a rush, needing to get back out there, and went to the front printer first before he got to his desk for the stickers.

"How goes it, Addie?" Second Adam said, "Have fun all alone? You missed a lot."

"I….it was fine," he said softly, turning to him, "Can you get these to Grigg? You're on lunch now, aren't you?"

Second Adam smiled as he took the stickers. "Yeah, Will's coming up here I think. I'll give it to him. You sure you're ok?"

Adam nodded. "Yes, thank you. I need to get back now. The alphas…."

“Gone,” Second Adam said, “And Will ruined all my potential fun by hiring the worst one. Bleh.”

He sighed. “Oh, I….I’m sorry. Is the alpha not attractive to you?”

Second Adam made a face. “Oh bloody hell, of course not. I wouldn’t let that man near me with a pencil let alone a knot.”

“Well…” Adam looked at the time, “We close soon so please go get those to Grigg.”

“Ok, ok!”

Adam saw Will head out and didn’t stop to talk to him, eager to be near the computers again. The area had only two people there when he sat down and neither of them were Nigell, much to his disappointment.

He tried to answer some emails for the next hour, looking up over and over again the entire time until the last library patron was gone.

Adam sighed as the music started.

It was just as well.

He knew Nigel coming back hadn’t been very likely but he’d hoped.

Maybe he needed to stop hoping and face facts.

He wasn’t meant to have an alpha.

Adam got up, cleaning off the computer area, and even his own desk before he grabbed his things to help the others. He ignored them mostly as he put books on the carts, and tried not to look at the doors.

They were locked.

No one was coming.

He heard Lee and Grigg laughing as he went to the men’s room to relieve himself but just sat down longer than he should’ve.

“It’s ok,” he said softly, touching his ring, “It….I’ll take it off when I get home.”

The thought made him bite back a whimper and he stood to leave, washed his hands and came out just as the others were headed for the doors.

Adam came out as they headed for the door and tried not to show how upset he was, but Grigg took his hand as they left. “You ok?”

He nodded. “Yes, I’m fine.”

Grigg squeezed. “If you need a ride…”

“I have my car,” Adam mumbled, as they walked through the second door, “I can…”

They all paused when they saw a puff of smoke come from around the front of the library, just out of sight. Grigg heard Adam gasp.

Alpha.

“Adam?”

Adam squeezed Grigg’s hand. “Is it…”

Lee came up between them, wrapping his arm around Adam’s neck. “We can drive you home, Addie, if you’re not ok with this.”

“Maybe it’s not him,” Grigg whispered.

“Oh it’s him,” Second Adam purred, “Who else would it be?”

Adam stared at the smoke, coming out in another puff, and when Nigel stepped into view he froze. Neither of them said a word, not even stepping closer, and before Adam could even let out a breath Nigel turned to walk away.

He was shaking in Grigg’s grip, and he heard Second Adam ask, “What the fuck was that?”

“Does he want Adam to chase him or what? That’s not how this works.”

“What kind of alpha…”

Adam stepped forward just as Nigel turned a corner. “Do you...do you think he’ll make me…”

“No, Adam,” Grigg said, “But maybe…”

“He’s an ass,” Second Adam growled, “You don’t need this kind of game playing, Addie.”

“But…”

“We’ll all go out to the bar, get a few drinks, and..”

Adam looked back at them. “I don’t...I think I want to go after him?”

“Adam…”

The sound of a motorcycle starting up made Adam freeze, and then he just *ran.*

Adam heard one of them yell, “Adam, wait!” but didn’t stop as he ran around the corner Nigel had disappeared.

He froze when he saw Nigel sitting on a motorcycle, feeling warm all over as slick dripped down his backside, and Nigel turned to just look at him.

Nigel didn’t say a word and yet to Adam it felt like he said *so much* .

Are you coming, Star?

This is it, Adam. Yes or no?

Adam ran at the motorcycle and hopped on as he gripped Nigel’s back hard. He was so hot, and Adam felt his own body growing warmer at just this touch.

Nigel took off then, and he held on tighter, never feeling better in his entire life.

He was with his alpha.

Adam whispered, *“Alpha* ,” purring against Nigel’s back, and felt Nigel’s hand touch his.

This was the right choice.

It had to be.

Why else would he feel so, so good?

Chapter 16

The feel of Nigel so close as they drove had Adam purring so much as the wind hit his face, arms tightening around Nigel's much bigger body while they moved. He felt so calm he could hardly keep his eyes open, though when they finally started to slow down, he opened them fully to see they were pulling up outside his apartment.

His disappointment made his stomach tighten.

Nigel had brought him home.

The motorcycle slowed as they pulled into the parking lot, and Nigel parked while Adam held on tight feigning sleep.

"Star?"

He didn't move, though he knew his scent would give him away, and Nigel took his hands in his to squeeze.

"Adam, Darling, I can smell your upset."

Adam blinked back tears. "I….I'm not upset."

Nigel sighed. "Star, I *know* what you smell like upset."

A tear fell down his cheek. "You brought me home."

"Was I not supposed to?"

He let out a long breath as he shook his head against Nigel's back. "I…I just…."

"I thought I'd take you where you're most comfortable and hope…" he sighed, "You'd let me linger a bit."

Adam's heart skipped a beat. "Oh."

"If you want me to take you elsewhere…"

He got up and off the back of Nigel's motorcycle, nervous again, and Nigel turned to smile at him.

"I thought you were just going to leave."

"I will if you want me to, Darling."

Adam shook his head. "I don't want you to. I….I'd like you to stay."

Nigel got up and held out his hand. "Then show me where we're going, Star."

Adam blushed as he took Nigel's hand and walked them to the door where even the comfort of his apartment didn't help his nerves. "I…are you hungry?"

"Not particularly, but if you---"

"No, I don't think I could eat," he said, biting his lip, "I….we can….I…."

Nigel squeezed his hand. "Would you like to show me your stars, Star? Just for a bit?"

Adam smiled. "Oh yes! We can go to the roof! It's very clear up there!"

"Then lead the way."

He did just that, conscious of people who walked by them, and a few were omegas that made Adam pull Nigel just a bit closer.

"I'm all yours, Darling," he whispered, lips close to Adam's ear, "Don't worry."

Adam blushed as they walked up the stairs.

"I….I didn't say anything."

Nigel kissed his hand. "You didn't have to, Star."

Adam pushed up the door and the cool air hit him fast, making him shiver. "I….I don't normally get…like that."

Nigel put a hand around his waist and pulled him closer. "Like what?"

"I….other omegas….I don't get jealous of other omegas."

"I get jealous as fuck of other alphas so I can't relate, Star. I…." he looked up, "Ah, there they are. All your stars."

Adam stared at Nigel as he looked at the stars, his heart beating faster and faster, and he felt warm all over. "They're not….the stars aren't mine, Nigel."

Nigel smiled. "No? Every time I see them I think of you, Darling, so…" he looked at Adam, "…doesn't that make them yours?"

He smiled as he blushed again, looking away. "No."

"Adam…."

Adam let go of Nigel, feeling very hot, and he sighed. "I….I should go get a bl…."

Nigel took off his jacket and set it on the ground. "You want to sit?"

Adam blinked. "I….won't you be cold?"

He shook his head. "I run hot, Star. Don't worry. Sit."

Adam sat down, and Nigel sat with a space between them while he looked up again.

“I….I’m not sure….”

“Tell me all your favorite stars,” Nigel said, smiling, “What’s that one they talk about in films all the time? The Big Dip?”

Adam laughed. “The Big *Dipper* , Nigel,” he said, shaking his head as he pointed up, “It’s not just one star, it’s *seven* stars and it’s an asterism, which is a group of stars in an identified pattern. They call it the Big Dipper because it looks like a long handled spoon.”

“Ah,” Nigel said, “My mistake.”

Adam looked at him again as Nigel’s fingers brushed his own. He moved his hand closer and felt slick form at his backside as he wiggled. He knew Nigel would say anything and yet he blushed even harder. “I….it’s ok.”

Nigel entwined their fingers and Adam looked down as he let out a long purr.

“I’m glad I have you to correct me, Star. No one knows better about all those bright lights up there.”

“I just read a lot, and…I like stars, that’s all. There are much more qualified---”

Nigel smiled. “I don’t care if they’re qualified, Star, they’re not *you* , yeah?”

Adam looked away again shyly. “I…no, but…”

His phone vibrated in his pocket and he frowned.

“Star?”

Adam pulled it out and saw many missed calls and texts.

He sighed. “My friends are calling me.”

“You can…”

Adam texted Grigg.

I’m ok, don’t worry. We’re looking at the stars. Nigel knows very little about stars.

I’m glad to hear it. Have a good night, Adam.

He put his phone away and looked at Nigel again, who frowned. “What’s wrong?”

“Your friends, they….I don’t think they like me much, yeah?”

Adam’s chest tightened. “I don’t care if they don’t like you.”

“Adam….”

He shook his head. “Do you care if your friends like me?”

“Absolutely, I do,” he said softly, squeezing Adam’s hand, “But fuck ‘em if they don’t.”

Adam smiled. “That’s how I feel too, Nigel. I….I like being around you, and…I…” he reached under his shirt and pulled out the ring, “It makes me feel good to….to….”

Nigel reached out to take the ring in his hand, smiling down at it. “To touch it?”

“Y…yes.”

“Why do you think that is, Star?” he asked, looking up through his lashes, “That you like it?”

Adam blushed. “I….I don’t know.”

“Don’t you?”

Adam took the ring back, nervous, and put it under his shirt again. “I’m not very comfortable with alpha attention usually,” he whispered, his voice barely above a whisper, “But I…I like your attention.”

“Adam…”

He squeezed Nigel’s hand. “I…I’m very glad you stayed until we closed,” he said, his voice shaking, “I…. I heard you thought I was being courted, and I promise I’m not I---”

Nigel squeezed his hand. “I won’t lie, Darling, and say I wasn’t upset thinking the soccer mom was courting you.”

Adam moved in closer as he let out a whine. “Nigel, she’s not! I….we broke up and she…”

Nigel touched his cheek and Adam purred. “I know, Star. I….I know. I just….fuck, Adam…”

Tears filled Adam’s eyes. “It scares me sometimes,” he admitted, “How….how it feels to be with you.”

Nigel sighed. “Darling, I don’t want to scare you. You know that, right?”

Adam nodded as a tear fell down his cheek.

“Honestly,” Nigel said, frowning, “I sat out there, waiting for you to come, and even then I wasn’t sure you’d even come near me.”

“I….I’m just…..”

“Scared.”

Adam nodded.

Nigel kissed his hand and Adam felt a gush of slick come out, making him feel *too* hot as Nigel smiled at him.

“I’m a little scared too, Star, you know? You…” he let go to press his hand against Adam’s chest right against the ring and smiled, “….you do things to me, Darling. I….I’m not a good man, yeah?”

“You---”

“Knowing you wear this,” he growled, making Adam shiver, “It….you say you’re not normally jealous, Star, but I *very* normally quite jealous. I….” he looked up at Adam, “There are days when I even see you talk to your friends and I want to pull you away, you know? I… I’m not surprised I scare you.”

Adam put his hand over Nigel’s. “No, that’s….that’s not what scares me, it’s….it’s I don’t like not being in control of myself. I….” tears made it hard to see as he whimpered, “I just…” he whined, feeling more slick gush from him as he gripped Nigel’s hand, “Alpha…”

Nigel pressed his nose to Adam’s neck and Adam whined as he breathed in deeply.

“Darling, I….fuck. Are you going into heat?”

Adam let out a sob. “I’m sorry, I….I didn’t…”

Nigel lifted him with a growl over his shoulder, and Adam purred as he all but ran for the door. He was so hot, practically boiling, and started to beg as Nigel cursed.

“Fuck me, fuck me, fill me, Alpha, I….I need….”

He felt so empty, the pain unbearable, and when Nigel reached into his trousers he purred thinking he was going to get what he needed but the touch was taken from him again.

“Alpha, I’ll be good! I….I’m so….”

Nigel laid him down, tears in his eyes, and touched Adam’s face. “Oh Star, I know you’ll be good, angel. I know. Fuck….fuck,” he growled.

Adam whined. “ *Alpha* , please, please, pl….”

He jumped up from the bed as Adam tore at his clothes, desperate to present, and he whimpered as his alpha ignored him still.

“Where the fuck is….”

“Please, please, please….fill me….Alpha….please….I need you, I need….”

Adam whined as Nigel returned, waiting, and when he turned him to his back he started to purr when Nigel touched his face.

“Oh, Star, look at you,” he whispered, “So fucking gorgeous, just like I thought you’d be.”

“Please….pl….”

Nigel kissed his forehead and Adam let out a sob. “Darling, I’m not gonna….I won’t….fuck, Adam. I haven’t even kissed you yet.”

Adam rubbed his cheek to Nigel’s as he let out another sob. “Alpha….”

Nigel kissed his cheek. “I’ll make you feel good, Star, just….lie back for me?”

Adam purred as he laid back, so hot he felt like he was on fire, and Nigel opened his legs.

“Christ, you smell heavenly,” he whispered, “So fucking sweet.”

“Alpha….”

Nigel suddenly picked up an artificial knot and Adam let out a sob. “No, no, n….”

He leaned in closer and pressed it into Adam as he let out a moan. “Close your eyes, Star,” he whispered, “Pretend it’s me, yeah? I’m here, angel. I won’t let you go through this alone.”

Adam started to sob as Nigel began to move the knot, moaning, and Nigel kissed his neck as he purred.

“Please….pl….”

“I’ve got you, Darling,” Nigel said hoarsely, “I’ve got you.”

The scent, sound, and feel of his alpha so close helped things start to lessen soon and Adam clutched at his neck as he was lost in pleasure.

“Hurts….it….”

“Shhhh….”

Adam whined as the knot moved inside him, and he kept his eyes closed tight but let out a sob.

“Alpha *please…”*

Nigel moved back with a growl, lifting his legs up higher, and his faster thrusts had Adam’s moans filling the room. He opened his eyes and saw Nigel’s face, his distress making him whine, and when he came it was with a sob spilling between them as Nigel pulled the knot away.

“Star….”

He felt no better, still so hot, and Nigel leaned over to touch his face.

“Alpha, *please* .”

Nigel had tears in his eyes as he stared down at him.

Why would his alpha not claim him?

What was he doing wrong?

“I can’t, Star. Fuck, I can’t.”

Adam burst into tears as the wave of heat returned even worse than before, and this time Nigel leaned over his back, pressing the knot into him as he kissed his neck.

“Feel me, Darling,” he whispered, “Fuck, Adam just….feel me.”

Adam let out a distress cry as Nigel buried his face against his neck and even with the knot thrusting inside him it wasn’t enough. “Please, I’ll be good. I’ll be so good. I’m so wet, Alpha. I want you so….”

Nigel covered his mouth and Adam let out a sob as he thrust harder, biting Nigel’s hand as the pleasure returned but still didn’t sate him. He came a second time, a third, a fourth, and finally passed out from exhaustion hours later only to wake to Nigel feeding him.

“Alpha….”

“Shh, eat, Star.”

Adam couldn’t see through his tears, whining, and ate like he was told but couldn’t stop crying.

He was *so empty* and his alpha wouldn’t fill him.

Nigel gave him water, and Adam let out a sob as he took the bottle away, brushing the hair from his forehead. “I’m so sorry, Star,” Nigel whispered, “Fuck….I….you won’t remember any of this, and I…..why the fuck did this have to happen tonight?”

He pressed his forehead to Adam’s, who whimpered, and then scented his cheek.

“Alpha….”

“What’s my name, Star?”

“Alpha….”

“Adam, what’s---” Nigel’s voice was shaking, “Star, tell me my name. Please.”

“Alpha,” Adam repeated, purring, “My alpha.”

He felt tears as Nigel pressed his lips to his cheek. “God, I fucking hope so.”

The sudden wave of heat made Adam cry out, and Nigel pulled back with a groan.

“I’ve got you, angel. Just….don’t move. Be good for me, Star? Please.”

Adam laid back, hoping, and waited for Nigel to help him but let out a distress cry when he pulled out the knot. “No, no….”

He pressed it inside, moving to Adam's back, and held him tight.

"Fuck, you're gonna hate me," Nigel whispered, "But I won't do this with you….I won't….fuck, Adam…I won't."

The pain continued all the way till morning when Adam passed out again and woke before dawn only for Nigel to be right there. He helped through another long wave, whispering in his ear, and Adam ate with no pleasure before it happened again and again.

He couldn't remember anything but feeling empty and Nigel's scent.

Then, a buzzing sound started that made Nigel's scent change.

"Fucking hell," he cursed, "I'm not letting anyone in, they can fuck right off."

"Alpha…."

"Shh, I've got you, angel. Shh."

Nigel helped him through another wave, and Adam whined as he wiped the sweat from his head after.

"My name, Star?"

"N…Alpha."

He kissed Adam's forehead. "Close, angel. Real close."

Adam whimpered. "Please, please….I'll be good. I…."

"I know, Star. Fuck, I know. I…."

A pounding made Adam scream, and he clutched Nigel who growled.

"FUCKING HELL! Darling, shhh. It's ok, it's ok, no one's gonna take me away."

"Alpha," he screamed, his nails digging into Nigel's back, "My alpha….please….please…"

Nigel hugged him and Adam purred. "Shh, Darling. Shh. I swear your friends are fucking idiots."

"Alpha…"

A voice in the distance

"That *fucking* knothead, I SWEAR I WILL KILL HIM!"

Nigel growled as he pulled away, and Adam cried out as the door suddenly flew open.

Adam let out a sob as another wave began and Nigel brushed the sweat from his forehead.

“It’s alright, Darling, it’s…”

Nigel growled.

“Happy now?” he growled, “You’ve made him worse.”

“I…I’m sorry? We…you didn’t…”

Nigel scoffed. “Didn’t what? Shove my cock in him because he went into a surprise heat? I may be a fucking asshole but I’m not a monster. He…”

“Please, Nigel,” Adam sobbed, “Please, I’ll be good. I’m so…so good…just…”

Nigel turned and leaned in to kiss Adam’s cheek softly. “You’re doing so good, Darling, so fucking wonderful. You are. But…we can’t. Not this time. Alright?”

“But I want to, I…” he sobbed, “I’m so wet, Nigel I…I want you so much! Please fuck me! Please, please, please! It hurts!”

Nigel pressed his forehead to Adam’s. “I know, Star,” he whispered, “I know.”

“I…I’m sorry, I…we were just worried.”

He lifted his head away and Adam tried to keep him closer as he sighed. “I know,” he said, “But…he’s safe with me. I’d never…I won’t hurt him.”

Adam barely knew what was happening other than Nigel, and he heard, “I know. I can see that. Thank you for taking care of him.”

The minute the door closed he was lost in it once again, and Nigel held him close as he brought him through one more time.

This pain lasted for four agonizing days until he woke up in the dark, covered in sweat, and just felt nothing. Nigel was asleep beside him and Adam bit back a whimper as he pressed his nose to Nigel’s neck but touched his own, finding nothing.

Nigel hadn’t claimed him.

He didn’t remember anything other than the pain of the past four days as he got up to shower, locking the door as he covered his mouth to hide the sound of his sobs. The rejection he felt was the worst he’d ever known, and when he came out of the shower in nothing but a towel, he dreaded Nigel’s final rejection.

But Nigel was gone.

Adam looked all over for a note.

Or even a text.

There was nothing.

Adam cried as he buried his face into the pillow Nigel had left, deep guttural sobs that made his whole body ache.

And then he called Will.

“Adam? Adam are…”

“I’m coming into work today.”

“Adam, I heard you had a rough---”

“I’m coming into work today,” he repeated, sniffling, “I need to work, Will. I have bills to pay.”

Will sighed. “Alright, I….if you need to take a break or anything please let me know.”

Adam sighed. “I won’t. I’ll be there soon.”

“Ok, Adam.”

He ended the call and took off all the sheets that he changed before he locked them into his bathroom so the smell didn’t permeate the whole apartment.

Then he put on new ones, unable to stop his tears, and got dressed by muscle memory not even looking in the mirror.

He walked into the library and went right to his desk to sit but felt so empty.

He wasn’t sure he’d ever stop feeling empty.

Adam checked the computer list and tried to stay busy, but all he could think about was Nigel.

What had he done wrong?

Why didn’t Nigel claim him?

He got so caught up he didn’t notice someone was at the desk until they cleared their throat.

Lee.

“I’m busy, Lee.”

“I was just coming to see how you were. I heard….”

“I’m very busy,” he said, glaring at him, “I….I don’t have time to talk, because we’re supposed to be *working* . I….I need to work.”

“Adam….”

“I *need to work* ,” he hissed, “I can’t just play around and talk all day like you all can. This is a *workplace* , Lee. Isn’t it?”

Lee glared at him. “You know what, *fine.* You work your little heart out. I just wanted to check on you, but I can see that’s not a good idea.”

Adam watched him leave and his eyes filled with tears.

He looked at the door, hoping to see Nigel.

And kept looking all the way to lunch, reaching out to touch his necklace but felt no calm from feeling it against his skin.

He wanted to rip it off, throw it away, and never see it again but the thought had him ready to scream so he just didn’t touch it for the rest of the day.

Nigel never came.

Not the whole day.

Adam knew then he’d be alone forever and it was all his fault.

Chapter 17

Adam could hardly focus on anything the next morning at work.

He found himself messing up easy tasks, things he'd done so often he should know them by heart, and he kept looking up every few minutes to the door which left him feeling more isolated than ever.

Nigel wouldn't come back today.

He knew it.

Adam's entire world felt off its axis without his visit even after only one day and the lack of his scent had him struggling last night to even sleep. He didn't know what to do.

"Adam."

He looked up from his keyboard and saw Second Adam stood there frowning. "Yes?"

"You were supposed to go on break almost an hour ago, Addie," he said, as Adam turned to look at the time, "Are you alright?"

Adam got up, tears stinging his eyes, and put a hand to his chest but froze when he realized there was nothing.

He'd forgotten his necklace. "I…."

Second Adam reached out to touch his arm, "Darling, if you want to talk about your heat, I'm —"

"Don't touch me," Adam hissed, "I….I don't want to talk about it and it's none of your business."

"Ad—"

Adam ran across the library to the break room and was grateful that no one was inside. He bought some cookies and sat down in tears, eating with no pleasure as his hand kept reaching for the spot on his chest where his ring would normally be.

How he had forgotten it?

He kept his eyes on the clock during his break, waiting for the time to pass, until he heard, "You in a better mood now?"

Adam didn't look at Lee.

"I don't want to talk."

“Adam….”

“Please, stop asking me about my heat, Lee. I don’t….I don’t want to talk about my heat or N….anything else. I….please.”

“Alright, Adam. I’m sorry.”

Time went by so slowly it felt like an eternity, so much so that he got up before it was over to head back.

And then he stared at the clock again to wait for his lunch break.

Adam barely felt like eating when he finally dragged himself there but he put his frozen dinner in the microwave waiting for it to beep before he pulled off the plastic to sit. He ate, eyes glued on the clock, and heard footsteps that made him turn.

Grigg.

Grigg smiled at him when Adam looked away, and he heard him pull out a frozen meal that he stuck in the microwave. “Hey.”

“Hello,” Adam said, frowning as he took a bite.

“Are you ok?”

He gripped his spoon tight as he looked down. “I’m just fine.”

“Adam…”

“I’m fine, Grigg,” he snapped, “Just….just fine.”

The sound of the microwave going off made Adam jump, and he turned to see Grigg pull out his food before he came to sit beside him.

“How did the heat go?”

“Fine,” he said, taking another bite.

Grigg sighed. “Just fine?”

“Yes,” Adam said, his voice shaking, “How else is it supposed to go? Wonderfully? It’s… painful, and it’s…”

Tears filled his eyes.

“Adam?”

Adam’s lip quivered as he turned to look at Grigg. “Do you think I’m going to be alone forever?”

Grigg blinked. “What?”

“Alphas don’t want me,” he said, as a tear fell down his face, “And I’m not attracted to anyone who does, and…I…”

Grigg put an arm around him and he leaned into the hug.

“Hey, hey…”

Adam whimpered. “I really thought he’d want me,” he said, “I…I don’t know what I did wrong.”

Grigg sighed. “Maybe it’s not that he didn’t want you,” he whispered, “Maybe he wanted you so much he…doesn’t want that to be the first time he gets to have you.”

Adam sniffled. “But…”

He pulled back, and smiled at Adam. “Give him a chance to explain, maybe? I’ve seen him look at you, Adam. He definitely wants you.”

He sniffled some more, and picked up his fork. “You really think he does?”

“Oh yeah,” Grigg said, taking a bite of his food, “I really do.”

Adam smiled. “Thank you, Grigg.”

He looked at the clock again, noticing how many minutes they had left, and for the first time all day didn’t feel like he was just going through the motions.

Maybe he needed to find out where Nigel lived.

He had a library card, Adam knew, and it might be unethical to take the address from it but Nigel had followed him around many times already so Adam didn’t think he’d mind.

If Grigg was right, of course.

They ate in silence after that, a comfortable one, and walked out together at the same time.

Adam froze the minute he turned to look at the door.

Nigel stood there and looked very upset.

“Adam?”

He almost ran across the library right to him as he smiled, and purred as Nigel smiled back.

“Hello Star.”

“Alpha.”

Nigel put his hand on Adam’s shoulder, then his arm, before he just took Adam’s hand in his.

“Can we talk, Darling?”

“I’m at work.”

“So?”

Adam laughed. “I have to work, Nigel.”

“Ah,” Nigel said, grinning, “Then walk me to my computer?”

“Ok.”

They walked together, not looking away, and when Nigel sat down Adam sat right beside him. “I thought you were going to work.”

“I’m helping you,” he said, blushing as he turned Nigel’s screen to him, “You….you want me to, right?”

“There is no one I’d rather have teaching me, Darling. Absolutely no one.”

He purred as he typed in Nigel’s ID number and his password before he finally said, “You….you didn’t stay.”

“Adam….”

A tear fell down his cheek. “I….I woke up alone, and….I know we didn’t….we didn’t…”

Nigel put his hand on Adam’s knee and he felt slick drip from his backside as he turned to look at him. “I wasn’t about to take you like that the first time, yeah?” he asked, shaking his head, “Not the first time. Star, we haven’t even kissed.”

Adam swallowed. “You want to kiss me?”

“Adam, I’d kiss you right now if I didn’t think you’d probably hate it.”

Adam blushed. “Oh.”

“Do you want me to kiss you, Star?”

He nodded.

Nigel squeezed his knee and he purred. “Can I walk you to your car after work? Or… hell….we can finally have that date we missed?”

Adam smiled. “I’d like that very much, Nigel.”

Nigel smiled as he touched his cheek. “I missed you terribly, Star.”

“I missed you too.”

“I…”

“Where can I find Knotsbury Farm romances?”

Adam turned to frown at an old woman who stood glaring at them both. “I….I don’t know.”

“Well,” she said, “Find out! I need to read the new one!”

“It’s….”

“You know, the fuc….” Nigel started, but Adam grabbed his arm.

“Nigel.”

He sighed and turned to his computer screen. “Go help, Star. I’ll be here.”

“Ok.”

Adam stood, looking back, and walked the old woman over to the new releases where he found the book in seconds. “Here you go.”

“I read this one,” she snapped, “I wanted the *new* one.”

“This is the new one.”

“Hmph,” she said, pushing it at his chest.

He frowned as he put the book back and headed for his seat but Nigel grabbed his wrist as he passed.

“Nigel….”

“I need your phone number, Adam, yeah? I….I need that and….”

“I can give it to you later.”

“But how else can I talk to you while I sit here all night?”

Adam smiled, biting back a purr, and blushed more as he went to his desk to grab a post it note. He wrote his number down and folded it before he went over to put the paper by Nigel who just grinned as he left.

He sat at his desk and pulled out his phone to wait.

A second later he got a message from a new number.

Hello Star.

Hello Nigel.

All the worry of the last twenty four hours vanished in seconds as he felt warm all over when he looked up to see Nigel watching him.

You look beautiful today, Star.

No, I don't.

Yes you do.

I couldn't sleep last night and I'm not even sure I looked at myself in the mirror this morning.

So what? You look fucking perfect.

He blushed.

Thank you, Nigel.

You're welcome, Darling.

The next few hours went by just the same, with Adam paying little attention to anything but his phone unless someone came to ask him direct questions, and when it was time for his dinner break he shot up fast to run to Nigel.

"Star, what…"

"I have break for dinner," he said fast, purring, "We can go somewhere close as I only have half—"

Nigel grabbed his arm and they left in a rush getting on Nigel's motorcycle. He grabbed him from behind as they drove off, feeling so happy he felt he might burst, and when they pulled up to Fuller's they went to the drive through.

"What would you like, Star?"

"I….I don't like anything here."

"What? Darling, I can't…"

Tears stung his eyes. "I DON'T LIKE ANYTHING HERE!"

Nigel cursed as he pulled out of the line and stopped just next door as Adam clutched his back.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, "I….I don't like how their food tastes. I….can we go to the chicken place instead?"

Nigel took his hands and kissed them. "Of course, Darling, why….I'm not fucking mad at you, you know? I should've asked."

"No, I—"

"No, it was shit of me to just pick the closest place. Hang on tight, alright?"

"Yes, Nigel."

They drove off again to the chicken place just across the street where Nigel took him inside.

“Whatever you’d like.”

“Um, I want the number four with nothing on my grilled chicken sandwich and I would like double macaroni please.”

The woman behind the counter just sighed. “Ok, what else can I….”

“I want the same,” Nigel said, putting his arm around Adam, “And extra ranch.”

“Nigel…”

They got their meal and sat at the furthest area.

It was just starting to fill up, and Adam normally would’ve asked to leave but he just put his hand over Nigel’s to squeeze. “Adam?”

“I don’t normally like crowds, but it’s ok.”

“Shit.”

“No, no,” he said, “I—I’ve been to bars with my friends, I—I can deal with loudness.”

“Star, I wanted you to have a nice dinner. I know it’s not anything fancy—”

“I don’t like fancy, Nigel,” he said, frowning as he picked up his fork, “I really don’t. Thank you for dinner.”

Nigel smiled as he took a bite of his food. “You’re welcome.”

Adam took a bite of his macaroni and sighed. “It’s very good.”

“Yeah?”

“Mmm, yes,” he said, sticking his fork in for another bite, “I….”

Nigel leaned forward, gripping his hand tight, and said, “Let me have a bite,” before he opened his mouth.

Adam blushed. “Um, you have some too.”

“I know,” he said, licking his lips as he opened his mouth again, “Feed me, Star.”

He purred as he lifted his fork up and fed the bite to Nigel who growled as he closed his mouth. Adam felt warm, but not the heat filled type, and before he could say anything Nigel pulled off the top of his macaroni to lift up a spoonful for him.

“Taste.”

Adam felt tears fill his eyes as he took the bite, and leaned in closer to Nigel. “It’s….it’s very good.”

“Yeah?”

“Y…yes.”

“Star,” Nigel said, scenting his cheek, “Christ you smell so good.”

“Nigel…”

“ *Excuse me* ,” someone hissed, making them both turn to see a beta woman glaring, “Do you have no shame? There are children here.”

Nigel growled. “We’re fucking eating.”

“And practically mating,” she snapped, making Adam blush, “There are…”

“Fuck off you bitter bitch. Just because no one wants your bony ass doesn’t mean the rest of us can’t be fucking happy courting!”

Adam’s eyes widened as she ran off in tears. “Nigel….”

Nigel sighed. “Star…shit. I’m sorry. She just…”

Adam pulled on Nigel’s shirt then, kissing him softly as Nigel growled, biting his lip as they broke for breath.

“Adam.”

He smiled. “You’re courting me? Really?”

Nigel laughed. “Darling, what do you think I’ve been doing all this time?”

Adam blushed. “I just thought you….you….you were being nice.”

He touched Adam’s cheek. “Star, I’m not *nice* , yeah? Only with you. Just you.”

“Nigel…”

Nigel kissed him again, harder this time, and Adam felt slick gush out of him fast as he purred. He couldn’t ever remember being this happy, not ever, and as they parted again Nigel pressed a finger to his lips.

“You should finish eating, yeah?”

“I….I’m not hungry anymore.”

Nigel grinned. “Adam…”

“Nigel…”

He reached down to pick up his sandwich and held it out to Adam. “Take a bite.”

Adam bit down, and the taste of the sandwich was amazing. He’d never tasted anything better.

“Good, it’s…it’s good.”

“More.”

And that was how Adam ended up eating all of Nigel’s dinner along with part of his own but fed Nigel just a little before he realized he had to get back to work. They came in only a few minutes late and caught the eye of Second Adam at the desk who just winked at him as they passed.

He sat down, pulled out his phone, and typed.

I think my friends are happy for us, Nigel.

They better fucking be. Though even if they weren’t I wouldn’t care, would you?

Adam looked up to see Nigel watching him.

No, I wouldn’t.

Nigel smiled as he set down his phone and typed in something on his computer that made Adam’s heart skip a beat.

COURTING GIFTS FOR OMEGAS WHO LIKE STARS

He purred as he kicked his feet a little and smiled when he opened up his email.

Today had started out so horribly and now he couldn’t wait to leave. He turned to look over across the library, catching Grigg and Second Adam helping at the desk before his eyes settled on Lee.

Lee who was asleep at his desk.

Adam frowned.

His phone vibrated and he looked at it.

Everything alright, Star?

Yes, I just saw Lee was sleeping. That’s not like him.

Maybe he didn’t sleep last night either. I’m sure it’s nothing.

Adam sighed, feeling uneasy, and then looked at Nigel again. He felt his unease vanish as he smiled, then typed again.

I’d really like to have our date tonight, Nigel. Can we?

Absolutely.

He grinned as he looked at Nigel who winked.

The end of the night couldn't come soon enough for him.

He could hardly wait.

Chapter 18

Nigel walked him out after he finished putting away some books, and he got on the back of Nigel's bike as they drove to his apartment where he suddenly started to get nervous.

The last time Nigel was here had been his heat not very long ago, and remembering waking up alone and unmated made him uneasy as they parked.

"Star? You ok?"

Adam got up and didn't say anything, nervous now as he heard Nigel coming up behind him. He walked up the stairs but dropped his keys, and Nigel picked them up with a frown. "Adam, if….Darling if you want me to go, I can go."

"NO!" he said, grabbing his hand, "I….please don't go. I want you to stay."

Nigel frowned. "Are you sure, Star? You don't seem like you want me to stay."

Tears stung Adam's eyes. "I….I'm nervous."

"Darling…"

"Can we just….I can make dinner and….we can….just…."

Nigel kissed his hand and Adam blushed. "We can do whatever you want, Adam. Whatever you want."

He smiled shyly. "Thank you."

"What are you thanking me for, huh? I came here to spend tonight with you, Star, and as long as you want me here I'm not going anywhere."

Adam unlocked the door, not sure what to say as they stepped inside, and he kept quiet the whole walk upstairs. He didn't want to say the wrong thing, or make Nigel upset with him. Beth had always told him he talked too much and often said strange things when he shouldn't.

The thought of Nigel saying anything similar had him in tears again by the time they got to his apartment door.

"Adam Darling, you're killing me here with your scent, yeah? Tell me what's wrong."

He unlocked the door and looked at Nigel. "Why do you like me?"

Nigel blinked. "What?"

"Why…" he sighed, "Why do you like me, Nigel?"

The sudden shift in Nigel's body language made Adam purr as he was backed up against the door, Nigel's nose pressed against his neck, and he felt slick already rolling down the back of his thighs at being so close.

"You smell so good," Nigel whispered, his lips hovering over Adam's skin, "And….you….you're fucking gorgeous, you know that, but…..it's *you* , Star. You're sweet, funny, and….you don't….you're not scared of me. Everyone is fucking scared of me."

"I….I am….scared," Adam whispers, as Nigel lifts his head, smiling when he touches Adam's cheek.

"I didn't mean *that* way, Star. Not that way. You told me that it scares you sometimes how it feels to be with me. I mean people who are terrified, Adam. There are fuckers who wouldn't walk on the same side of the street I do. But not you."

Adam blushed. "You've never been anything but nice to me."

Nigel put both hands on Adam's cheeks as he pressed their foreheads together. "Only you, Star. Only you."

"Nigel…."

He kissed him then, making Adam purr, and before he can even think they're backing up into Adam's apartment. Adam whined as Nigel pushed him against the wall inside, kissing down his neck, and the gush of slick that came out made him sigh as Nigel reached his hand down the back of his pants. Adam moaned as his hand touched the edge of his slick wet hole and then jumped back, pushing him fast.

"Adam?"

"I…..I think….I…..we need to slow down, Nigel."

Nigel sighed, hands at his sides, and Adam felt tears sting the corner of his eyes as Nigel looked away.

"Yeah," he said, "Ok, Star. We'll slow down. You….you wanna show me around?"

Adam blushed. "Y…yes," he said, turning away as he walked down the rest of the hallway to the living room, "This….this is the living room and the kitchen."

"I remember."

He felt his face turn even more red as he remembered the last time Nigel had been here.

"Oh, yes….you do. I….maybe…."

Nigel grabbed his hand and squeezed. "Keep going, Darling."

Adam nodded and led him past the kitchen/living room and down to the first bathroom. "I….I'm not sure how big *your* apartment is but—"

“It’s about the same, Star,” Nigel said, leaning in to look, “Though I do have a much bigger shower.”

He frowned as he let go of Nigel’s hand. “Oh,” he said, biting his lip as he thought of just *why* Nigel would have a bigger shower and the jealousy that clawed at him made the tears he held in fall. Adam sniffled and let out a long breath. “The bed….”

Nigel suddenly hugged him from behind and Adam froze, biting his lip to keep from whimpering.

“Star,” he sighed, “You smell upset again, Darling, and I…..what did I do?”

Adam sniffled. “I….you didn’t….”

“I obviously did, Adam,” Nigel said, his chin on Adam’s shoulder, “Tell me, yeah?”

“The….the shower. You….you’ve been in it with….other people?”

Nigel kissed his neck and Adam shivered. “I have,” Nigel whispered, “But….not for a long fucking time. No one important, Adam. I promise. No one important.”

Adam closed his eyes. “I’m sorry I’m getting so upset, I….I know that…..”

Nigel hugged him tighter. “We’re *courting* , Star, yeah? I got upset about your soccer mom, it’s right you got upset about me possibly fucking people in my shower.”

Adam hissed. “Nigel….don’t…..”

He turned Adam around slowly and backed him up against the wall as he smiled, putting both hands on each side of his head. “How about I promise the next time I fuck someone there it’ll be you?”

Adam purred. “I….I’ve never….not in the shower.”

Nigel leaned in to kiss his cheek. “No?”

“No,” Adam whispered, his voice shaking, “I…..is it…..it doesn’t….it’s not uncomfortable?”

He smiled against Adam’s cheek. “I promise, Star,” he said, his voice almost a growl, “You won’t be thinking much about anything other than my knot if I fuck you in the shower.”

Adam moaned. “Nigel….”

“I….shit,” Nigel said, his breath teasing Adam’s neck, “You want to go slow and I just keep….”

Adam wrapped his arms around Nigel, scenting his neck, and Nigel growled as he breathed him in deeply. “I’m….I’m very wet, Nigel.”

“Star….Darling, you’re gonna kill me if….”

He purred. “I….I think we should….go out somewhere,” he said, his voice shaking, “So we….we can….”

“Like that chicken joint with all the stupid betas yelling at us for even looking at each other?” Nigel sighed, kissing his ear, “Adam….”

“I…..” he whined, “Nigel….”

Nigel stepped back, letting out a long breath, and shook his head. “I….I need a smoke. You should order something, yeah? I don’t care what you order just…”

He took off almost in a run, and Adam bit his lip as he fought the urge to call him back again.

Why was he hesitating? He was the one who’d been so upset Nigel didn’t mate him on his heat, so what was stopping him now?

Adam sniffled as he opened up his favorite restaurant app, the Cheesy Barn, and ordered macaroni and cheese and two cheeseburgers with fries. He went to his room in tears and walked to his nightstand where he usually kept his ring.

But all that was there was the chain.

No ring.

He blinked, confused, and looked on the ground.

“Where….where is it?”

Adam got on his hands and knees in tears, whining as he looked under the bed.

“WHERE IS IT?”

He started to pull out everything he had under there in boxes, hissing, and cried out when he couldn’t find it.

“I…..”

“Star?”

Adam turned, shaking, and whimpered. “I can’t find it.”

Nigel frowned. “Can’t find what, Darling? What….”

He put his hand on his chest and could hardly see through his tears. “The….the ring,” he whined, “The ring you….I CAN’T—”

Nigel got on the ground as he wiped his face. “Oh, Star, don’t cry, Darling. I can get you another r—”

Adam pushed him. “I WANT THAT ONE! YOU GAVE ME THAT! I LOVE IT! I….” he put his hands over his face, shaking, “STUPID! I’M SO ST—”

He pulled Adam into his arms as he hit his back and not once did he say a word. Adam fell into him, so upset he could hardly breathe, and Nigel just held him.

“Adam…..Star, is….that it there?”

Adam lifted his head. “What? Wh….”

Nigel leaned back, reaching out with his long arm, and pulled at something under the bed till it was close enough to pick up then held out his hand for Adam.

It was his ring.

Adam smiled through his tears. “You….you found it.”

Nigel smiled. “See? You didn’t lose it, Star. It was just hiding. You wanna give me your chain there so I can help you put it—”

Adam sniffled, shaking his head, and held out his left hand. “Please?”

Nigel blinked. “You’re sure?”

He nodded.

Nigel took Adam’s hand in his, and Adam felt his hand shaking as he pushed the ring on slowly.

It fit perfectly.

“Nigel.”

“Perfect fit, huh? I….”

Adam launched himself at him, purring, and Nigel growled as he pulled him down. He reached for Nigel’s jeans, hands shaking, and Nigel broke their kiss to stare up at him. “Adam….Star, you….you’re gonna have to…..slow or fast, Darling? Because I’m half knotted already.”

He kissed Nigel again softly, wiggling on top of him, and felt Nigel shudder at the movement.

“I….I….I don’t want to wait, Nigel.”

“You’re sure, Adam? I…..Star, I can wait. I’ve waited for months now. I can wait longer, I —”

Adam put a finger to his lips as he smiled, shaking his head. “I don’t want to wait, Nigel. I….please?”

Nigel growled as he stood up and Adam frowned before he reached out a hand for him to take. He touched Adam's cheek. "Let's do this properly, yeah?"

Adam nodded, smiling shyly, and Nigel stepped closer as he pulled off Adam's sweater vest in a rush. He was shaking as he reached for Adam's buttons, and soon Adam started to help as he purred.

"I….I'm very aroused, Nigel."

"Star…."

He moved closer, his voice shaking. "Are you aroused?"

"Close to knotting, Adam," he said tightly, "Darling, I don't mean to sound like an asshole but can you….not….talk? Just for a bit?"

Adam frowned. "Ok."

Nigel finished his buttons, not looking up, and when he peeled Adam's shirt back was when the doorbell rang.

"Who…."

"I ordered dinner," Adam mumbled, "I…I'll get it."

Nigel grabbed his arm. "Not like that, you won't."

Adam pulled his hand back sharply. "Don't tell me what to do!"

Nigel's eyes widened as Adam rushed off, his distress coming fast, and he tried to tell himself Nigel wasn't like Beth. He loved hearing him talk, he'd said he did.

Was he just lying?

Adam opened the door and the alpha woman there blinked at him. "Um, I have….are you Adam?"

"Yes, I…."

Nigel grabbed the food from her with a growl. "He's mine," he said, wrapping his arm around him, "Fuck off."

She sprinted off before Adam could finish with her tip, and he pushed Nigel away again.

"That was very rude, Nigel! She was just doing her job!"

"She was fucking staring at you!"

"SO? YOU STARE AT ME ALL THE TIME!"

“THAT’S BECAUSE I—-” Nigel let out a long breath, shaking his head, “I….fuck. Star, I’m sorry.”

Adam took the food and put it on the counter, tears falling down his face, and he didn’t answer him as he took out every carton.

“Adam…”

He found the plastic fork and opened his macaroni fast, taking a bite as he walked to the couch where he fought the urge to whine.

The sound of wrappers being opened and cartons moved made him want to ask Nigel to leave but he didn’t even when Nigel sat on the other end of the couch. “Star?”

Adam took another bite as he sniffled, and even though it was his favorite restaurant he was still so unhappy.

“Christ, Adam, I’m sorry.”

He turned to glare at him. “What are you sorry for?”

“I….”

“Being rude to that alpha driver or….telling….” he whimpered, “Telling me to be quiet? Do you not like it when I talk, Nigel? Do….did I talk too…”

Nigel rushed to come across the couch and pulled Adam into his arms. “Oh, angel,” he whispered, “Oh no, Star, *no* . I was…..Darling, you were making me close to blowing my load, yeah? I didn’t….I want to come inside you, Star. Nowhere else. I didn’t….you turn me on, Adam. More than anyone or anything ever fucking has.”

Adam purred as he lifted his head. “Really?”

He touched his face. “ *Really* . Darling, I….I’d never ask you to be quiet. Talk all you want, yeah? Tell me about the stars, the moons, all that shit. I love your voice, Star. I…I absolutely love…” he swallowed, “I love your voice.”

Adam sniffled. “I….I love your voice too, Nigel.”

Nigel smiled. “Yeah?”

He nodded. “I….it…I…I don’t remember anything from my heat but I….I do remember….I remember your voice and your….your *scent* . I *love* your scent. I….Nigel….”

Nigel nuzzled his cheek. “You drive me crazy, angel,” he whispered, as Adam purred, “Your voice, your fucking perfect scent, your….Adam….”

“I’d like to have sex after we have dinner, Nigel,” Adam said, making Nigel smile against his cheek. “Is that ok?”

He pulled back, still smiling, and nodded. “More than, Star. More than. Can I…..can we share?”

Adam blushed. “You want to feed each other again?”

“Yeah, angel. Can we?”

Adam nodded, and Nigel went to pick up his fallen food where the wrapped burger fell on the floor. He unwrapped and Adam took a bite as he purred, and the taste was just as wonderful as when they’d done this before. Adam got closer and took a spoonful of macaroni and cheese to give Nigel who growled his face so close Adam wanted to kiss him.

“Good?”

He nodded. “Amazing.”

They fed each other *everything* , and Nigel even went to get Adam’s burger so they could finish that too. He had his hands on Adam’s chest a second later, touching down his body, and Adam stood up fast to kick off his trousers before he laid back on the couch in his briefs to stare up at Nigel.

He undressed piece by piece, letting everything fall, and Adam whined when he saw Nigel entirely naked. He was bigger than him, more muscled, and yet as he drank in the sight of him he couldn’t help but focus on his cock already half knotted.

“Nigel….”

Nigel stroked his cock, and Adam whined as he got closer. He tried to take off his briefs but Nigel stopped him, smiling as he put his hands at Adam’s waistband. “Let me, Star.”

“Alpha….”

He peeled down Adam’s briefs, the slow pull across his skin making Adam moan, and when his cock was free Nigel sighed. “It’s so different now,” he said, reaching out to touch as Adam whined, “Seeing you like this and…knowing…..what’s my name, angel?”

“Nigel,” Adam moaned as he pulled his briefs off entirely, “Nigel, Nig—”

Nigel kissed him then, ever so softly, and he felt so warm.

It wasn’t a heat.

He knew what his heats were like.

This….this felt like an inferno.

Adam moaned as Nigel lifted his legs, and let out a cry as Nigel pulled back to thrust into him slowly. “Nigel….”

“Fuck, Adam….ugh…..so fucking perfect, Star. Christ, I….” he kissed Adam hard, making him groan, and when he began to thrust slowly Adam was lost.

It had never been like this with Beth.

Not once.

Adam had always felt like she wanted sex, not him, and with Nigel every intaked breath and whispered, “Adam….fuck…..oh…..oh Star. Fuck, fuck….” had him know it was *him* Nigel wanted.

All him.

He let out a sob as Nigel pulled back, panting as he frowned, and touched his face. “Star?”

“Nigel…”

“Christ, am I hurting you? Are….”

“I’ve….no, I…..I’m just so happy.”

Nigel smiled, his eyes shining, and he touched his face. “Christ, Star….you….I…..”

Adam kissed him again, desperate to taste, and when he felt Nigel tense he knew things were close.

“Nig—”

“I’m trying, Darling, I’m….fuck…..you….you….”

Adam grabbed Nigel’s hand, moving it against his weeping cock, and Nigel began to stroke with each slow thrust as he groaned, face buried in Adam’s neck. He braced himself for Nigel’s bite, ready, but knew he shouldn’t.

It was too soon.

It—

Nigel came with a shout, knot locking, and Adam purred as he sucked marks on his neck, deep bruising marks he knew would be there in the morning. Adam clutched him, panting for breath, and when Nigel whispered, “Come for me, angel,” he spilled between them with a whimper, nose pressed to Nigel’s neck as tears fell down his cheeks.

They lay there, basking in the afterglow, and it was an awkward angle but nice and close. Adam didn’t mind, purring, and Nigel kissed his neck as he growled lightly. “Amazing. I could….if I could I’d fuck you all night.”

“Nigel….”

“Adam….”

“Stay? Please?”

Nigel lifted his head. “Where else would I go?”

Adam sniffled as Nigel touched his face, and kissed him again softly. “I…I’m glad you….we didn’t….on my heat.”

“Yeah?”

He nodded. “I….I don’t remember my heat, but I—I’ll remember tonight for the rest of….my life.”

Nigel pressed his face to Adam’s cheek. “So will I, Star. So will I.”

They lay there, sweaty and wet from their spent passions, but the scent had Adam purring loudly even as his eyes grew heavy. “I…I’m….”

“You can rest, Star. I’ll clean up.”

“Mmm….kay.”

Adam fell asleep first but woke up in his bed hours later in the dark with Nigel hugging him from behind snoring in his ear. He smiled as he rolled over and laid his head on Nigel’s chest in the dark.

“Alpha.”

The last thing he heard was Nigel snore, and couldn’t help his own purr as he drifted again.

Only to wake up to his phone ringing.

Nigel groaned. “Who the hell….”

Adam whined, rolling over, and felt for his phone.

WILL

He frowned. “It’s Will.”

“Your alpha boss? It’s six thirty in the goddamn—”

Adam sat up with a yawn as he answered. “Will?”

“ADAM! ADAM, LEE IS IN THE HOSPITAL! I’VE BEEN TRYING GRIGG ALL—”

Adam let out a distress cry as he got up, stumbling to his closet, “I….I’ll come! Tell me….is….is he….”

“He’s not waking up but they’re doing tests I—Second Adam is on his way and….it’s bad, Adam. I….”

“Tell me where, Will, pl—”

“Star?”

Will told him and Adam felt the phone drop from his hand as he tried to calm down.

“I’m….I have to go, I’m sorry.”

“What’s wrong, Star?”

“My….my friend Lee. He….he’s in the hospital.”

“Oh Star. I….I can call off work, yeah? Come w—”

Adam shook his head as he tried to not to cry. “No, I….I’m fine. He’s not….I’m fine, Nigel. I….you can go to work. I’ll call you. I….”

Nigel hugged him as Adam closed his eyes. “You’re sure?”

He nodded.

Nigel kissed his neck. “You smell like you need me, angel, but….I won’t push.”

Adam sniffled. “I….thank you for….last night. It was…”

Nigel turned him around and kissed Adam deeply as he purred. He felt the kiss all the way to his toes and moaned as they parted. “Last night was amazing, Star. Absolutely fucking amazing. I….thank *you* for last night, yeah? I did nothing.”

“Nig—”

He smiled. “I’m gonna get dressed, and make you something quick, alright?”

Adam nodded.

“Get dressed.”

The minute he was gone Adam felt the tears come, and he tried not to cry out as he dressed.

Lee could be very sick.

He knew that.

But it didn’t mean he was dying.

Not like his father.

Not….not like before.

Adam finished getting dressed fast and found Nigel had made him frozen waffles and orange juice. He kissed him as soon as he was close, and Nigel held up the waffle as Adam purred.

“It’ll help.”

He ate from Nigel’s hand, purring the entire time, and when they were done Nigel kissed him again softly.

“Call me. Doesn’t matter when. Just call.”

“I…” he blinked back tears, “I will.”

Nigel touched his cheek. “I’ll see you soon.”

“I….yes.”

“Can I walk you to your car?”

Adam nodded as they left, hand in hand, and Nigel even got him to his car where Adam rolled the window down. He leaned in to kiss him again. “I mean it,” he said, “Call me.”

“I will. Th…thank you, Nigel.”

Nigel took his hand and kissed Adam’s ring. “Don’t thank me, Star.”

“But….”

He looked at the ring with a smile. “I like it better on your finger, don’t you?”

Adam smiled. “Yes.”

“See you soon.”

Adam watched him drive off, wishing he’d asked him to come, and then headed for the hospital.

Lee needed him to be strong.

He had to be.

There was no other option.

Chapter 19

Adam called Grigg several times and even left text messages while he drove with his voice, tears stinging his eyes as he struggled not to get too upset. He got to the hospital faster than he expected though he sat outside in the car to calm down while he called and texted Grigg again but got no answer.

Where was he?

He finally felt calm enough to head inside where the sight of so many people and sounds had him on edge before he even walked into the hospital fully. Adam let out a long breath as he went to the counter.

The woman there smiled at him. “May I help you, Sir?”

“Yes, I….” his lip quivered, “My friend is….Lee Fallon? He….”

She looked away fast to type and said, “Yes, Mr. Fallon is on the eleventh floor in room 1121.”

Adam let out a long breath. “Th….thank you,” he said, “I….can I go see him now?”

The woman, who he saw was named Sally on her nametag, smiled at him sadly as she handed him a visitor pass. “Of course, Sir.”

He took the pass and walked slowly to the elevator while he wished he’d asked Nigel to come.

They weren’t mates yet and he didn’t want Nigel to think he couldn’t handle things by himself, but right now he really didn’t like being alone. He felt cramped in the elevator, tapping his foot as he watched the numbers go up, and when he saw eleven he practically ran out needing to be near his friends.

He heard, “He’s gonna be…” just as he walked in the door and Second Adam shouted, “ADDIE!” and ran to him fast. Adam clutched him back as they hugged and Will nodded at him with a sad smile.

“I….I’m sorry I didn’t….how long have you both been here?”

Second Adam sniffled as he stepped back. “I got here about two hours ago but Will’s been here since last night.”

Adam frowned at Will. “All alone?”

Will looked away. “Y…yeah, mostly.”

“Mostly?”

“Well, he wasn’t exactly alone, right? He had…our drama queen Lee here.”

Second Adam took Adam’s hand and led him to the bed where Lee was hooked up to machines and just the sight of him made Adam’s tears spill over. “He’s….he looks so….”

“The cancer is back,” Will said, his voice shaking, “It’s spread to his uterus and they….they’re gonna have to take everything but they can’t without Grigg here.”

Adam wiped his eyes. “No one’s gotten a hold of him?”

They both shook their hands.

“I….I’m gonna call again. I….excuse me.”

He walked down the hallway, tears blurring his vision slightly, and grabbed a tissue from the front desk before he went to the waiting room area to try Grigg again.

It wasn’t too loud, though there was a TV playing and some children but he paced as he texted a few more times.

He thought for a moment about calling Nigel, but decided against it.

They’d just started courting and it felt like too soon.

Adam sighed as he went to leave the waiting area when his phone started to ring.

Grigg’s name was big as life across the screen.

“Grigg!” he said, frowning, “Everyone’s been trying to call you.”

“I’m so sorry, Adam! I wasn’t….I had my ringer off. What hospital is Lee at?”

“Mercy,” Adam said, sniffling, “Are you on your way? You shouldn’t be on the phone and driving.”

“I’m not driving,” Grigg said, “Duncan is.”

Adam’s chest tightened. “Oh.”

“We’ll be there soon, ok? Is everyone alright?”

“I….yes, we’re fine. Please hurry.”

“I will!”

“Goodbye Grigg.”

“See you soon, Adam.”

He felt a tear fall down his face as the call ended and he let out a long breath before he left the waiting room. The walk back didn’t help much at all and when Second Adam and Will

saw him they both frowned. “Adam, is everything….”

“Grigg is coming,” he said, sitting down with a sigh.

“Oh. Well, that’s….that’s good.”

Adam took Lee’s hand in his. “He’s always reminded me a lot of an alpha,” he whispered, his voice tight, “I….I don’t like seeing him look so….so helpless.”

Second Adam sat down beside him and leaned his head on Adam’s shoulder. “None of us do, Addie. None of us do.”

They all were quiet for a long while, just watching the machines or Lee, until they heard the door open when the doctor came inside. He was younger than Adam expected and handsome.

“Well, I see the party is getting bigger.”

Will sighed. “Yeah. We’re still waiting on the guest of honor.”

“The hospital tried to call,” the doctor, who had a nametag Adam couldn’t read, “But he’s not answering.”

“He says he’s on his way,” Adam sniffled.

“Well,” the doctor said, “Hopefully he’s here soon. Lee’s a….he’s a great guy. It’s a shame he….” he sighed, “He’s never seemed the type to have children but most omegas…”

“Outdated views, Doc?” Second Adam mumbled, “Lots of us don’t want kids.”

“That’s not what I….”

Will stood with a sigh. “Calm down, Adam, yeah? It’s not omegaist to say it’s sad Lee won’t be able to have kids if he gets the surgery.”

Second Adam scoffed. “Yeah, well…”

The doctor blushed slightly. “I didn’t mean to offend you, I’m sorry.”

“Wouldn’t be the first time an alpha did,” he mumbled, “But I accept your apology since you’re so hot.”

The doctor laughed. “Well, thank you for the compliment. I….with that I will be on my way. But I’ll be back when Mr. Harris is here.”

Second Adam grinned. “Please do come back, Dr. Sexy.”

“It’s Horst,” the doctor said, “Dr. Horst.”

“Not as good as Dr. Sexy but I’ll take it.”

He laughed again as he left them, and Adam just sighed. “That was inappropriate, Adam.”

“Lee would’ve been proud. Hell he probably would’ve done it himself if he….could’ve.”

They all fell silent, and Adam bit his lip as he tried not to whine.

Lee was strong.

Very strong.

But what if he wasn’t strong enough to fight this a second time?

“Is he…?”

All three of them looked at Grigg whose red rimmed eyes and flushed cheeks made it obvious he’d been crying.

Second Adam got up and hugged Grigg hard while Adam looked at Lee again.

“He hasn’t woken up yet,” Second Adam said, his voice thick, “The lazy thing just wants his beauty sleep I think.”

Grigg laughed. “Adam…”

“The doctors said they called you but you didn’t answer so they called Will.”

“I was…with Duncan.”

Adam’s chest tightened as he thought of Nigel.

He really wanted Nigel here.

Adam let go of Lee’s hand and reached for a tissue to wipe his eyes.

“…at least get lucky? Lee would want that for you, you know.”

“A little.”

“Good, very good. Come sit with us.”

Adam turned to see Second Adam grab a chair for Grigg who sat down. “What did the doctors say?”

“The cancer is back,” Will said, “And it’s spread to his uterus and…they have to remove everything.”

Grigg frowned. “What? Lee said…”

“Lee said he doesn’t get any heats,” Adam said, touching Lee’s hand on the bed, “He never said he didn’t have a uterus, he said the chemotherapy ruined his heats and scent glands. They said if they do this he won’t have kids.”

“He doesn’t want kids, so that’s…that’s fine. He’ll be fine.”

Adam frowned.

“Grigg, he might not be fine. We don’t know for sure.”

Grigg shook his head, grabbing Lee’s upper arm. “He’s strong, stronger than all of us, he’ll… he’ll be fine.”

They all sat there for what felt like hours, not saying much, and Adam struggled not to call Nigel especially when he saw Grigg check his phone so often texting.

“I…I have to tell Duncan to go,” Grigg said, “Can any of you take me home?”

“I can,” Second Adam said, “I could use the company.”

Grigg smiled. “Ok, give me a minute.”

The minute he was gone Second Adam sighed. “I’m glad he finally got his head out of his ass about the sexy old alpha.”

Will sighed. “I think we all are.”

“And now Addie is getting closer to Nigel, and really we just have Will here who…”

“Who wants you to not talk about him like he isn’t in the room,” Will mumbled, blushing.

“What else am I supposed to do?” Second Adam snapped. “Sit here and….watch….I….shit. I…I need to…”

Adam felt tears fill his eyes as Second Adam ran out of the room and saw Will put his head in his hands. “Will?”

“Why can I never know how to talk to omegas? You’d think by now after all this time I….I could….”

He frowned. “I think you’re very good at talking to omegas.”

Will sighed. “You’d be wrong. I never….sorry, Adam. You don’t need to hear this.”

“No, but if you need me to, I'll listen anyway.”

Will spread his hands over his face and smiled with tears in his eyes as he laughed. “I know you will, but that doesn’t mean I’ll force you.”

“Will…”

“It’s fine, Adam. I just need to work on it better.”

He frowned. “Ok.”

They were both quiet again after that, waiting for Grigg and Second Adam to return, and when they did both looked as if they'd been crying more. Grigg sat right next to Adam and sighed. "Any change?"

"Nope. Did you talk to Duncan?"

"Yes, he doesn't want to leave and he's gonna get us all food."

Second Adam sat down next to Grigg. "He's a keeper, that one, even if he's some sort of super spy hero."

"Spy hero? Who told you that?"

"Lee," Second Adam said, sighing, "You don't bloody tell me anything."

Grigg took Lee's hand on the bed and squeezed.

"I do tell him everything, don't I?"

"Yeah, you do."

They all stared at Lee, hoping for a change, and when Dr. Horst came in again they turned to him.

"I see he's got even more friends here now," he said, smiling, "Hello Grigg."

"Hello, Doctor. I…is he…"

"We have to wait for him to regain consciousness to do anything other than the scan he received coming in tonight, but I believe if he has all of his reproductive organs removed he'll go into full remission. It's returned and spread, yes, but…he's very strong and he can fight this."

They all looked at Lee.

"If he has it all removed," Adam said, frowning, as he felt eyes on him, "It will affect…his… Lee is very sexually active."

"Adam!" Grigg said, "We shouldn't be talking about this when Lee isn't able to be a part of the conversation. We're not the ones who make these decisions."

Horst looked down at the papers in his hand, and then up again. "No, he isn't. But you are, Grigg. Lee made you his medical power of attorney."

Grigg blinked. "He did?"

"Yes, it's here. You didn't know?"

He looked at Lee. "No."

“Well,” Horst said, patting his back, “If he doesn’t wake in forty eight hours you’ll have to decide what happens.”

“I already know,” Grigg said, tears in his eyes, “I’d tell you to do the operation. I know that’s what he’d want.”

“Yes, I suppose he would.”

Dr. Horst took Lee’s vitals, saying nothing, and then left them all again. Grigg leaned his against Adam, who took his hand to squeeze tightly as he finally whispered, “I wish Nigel was here.”

“You could call him?”

Adam frowned. “He’s at work.”

“You can still call him, Adam. He’s your alpha, it's his job to be here,” Second Adam mumbled, “That’s the reason we have alphas, isn’t it? Grigg’s alpha is getting us hamburgers and Nigel could wait with him.”

Adam frowned. “Can I call him?”

“You can,” Grigg said, “Or I can if you want?”

He stood up, shaking his head. “No, I…I’ll call. Excuse me.”

Adam almost ran from the room, needing to hear Nigel’s voice so very badly, and was in tears again when he got to the waiting area where he pressed Nigel’s number.

“Star. I’ve been worried sick all day. Darling, are you alright?”

He shook his head. “N..no,” he whispered, “I….I really want you here.”

“Oh Star,” Nigel sighed, “I’ll leave right now, yeah?”

“You have work. Won’t you get in trouble?”

“Fuck work,” Nigel mumbled, “Star, I told you this morning I would’ve skipped it. Didn’t I?”

Adam sniffled. “Yes.”

“So skipping it now isn’t a problem. What floor are you, Star?”

“E….leven,” he whispered, “Please hurry, but….be careful?”

“I will, angel. See you soon.”

“See you soon, Nigel.”

The call ended and Adam smiled, rubbing the ring on his hand with two fingers as he purred. Nigel was coming. He couldn't stop smiling as he headed back and frozen when he saw Will coming toward him. "Will?"

"I was….are you ok?"

"Yes. I'm fine. Nigel is coming."

Will frowned. "Adam, you….you know I could comfort you. I'm an alpha too."

He stepped back. "I know that, Will."

"So I don't really know why you all need to call Nigel or Duncan when…."

Adam sighed. "You might be an alpha, Will, but you're not *my* alpha."

Will blinked. "Oh."

"I…..I didn't know what that meant for a very long time but I do know how and…you're not. I'm sorry if that makes you feel bad."

He smiled. "No, Adam, it…." he put his hand on Adam's shoulder, "It makes me happy that you can say it at all."

Adam smiled. "Oh, well that's—"

They both heard "HE'S AWAKE!" and ran into the room where Second Adam and Grigg were both smiling and Lee was wide awake.

"The gang's all here," Lee mumbled, "All I did was pass out. I might've bumped my head but…"

They all looked at each other. "Lee, it's…it's not just that," Grigg sighed.

Lee froze. "It's back?"

"Yes, but…"

He laughed as tears filled his eyes. "I knew it couldn't last. Hey, at least I got a good year of amazing sex, huh?"

Adam leaned against the wall, shaking, and barely heard the rest of the conversation until Will grabbed his arm.

"Hey," Will said, as Adam frowned, "Let's all let Grigg and Lee talk a bit yeah? We can see if Duncan has those burgers."

"But…" he heard Second Adam say.

Adam grabbed Second Adam's arm and all three of them headed out into the hallway.

“Sucks not to be one of the cool kids, doesn’t it?” Second Adam mumbled.

“I don’t think it’s very cool what they need to talk about,” Adam said.

“I know, Addie, I was just—”

“You shouldn’t make fun of things like that, Adam.”

“I wasn’t…”

All three of them headed into the elevator and went downstairs where Duncan was waiting. He looked awkward sitting there alone with several bags of food but spotted them immediately.

“Is everything…”

Will held out his hand for Duncan to take and the alphas exchanged a handshake.

“Everything’s fine. Grigg and Lee just needed some time.”

“Ah, well….I brought burgers and french fries. I’m not sure…”

Adam sat down two chairs away from him with a sigh. “I’m not hungry thank you,” he said, staring at the door for Nigel.

“I am!” he heard Second Adam say, and tapped his foot as he kept staring.

He even pulled out his phone to see how long it had been, and saw only a few minutes had passed.

“You really like him, huh?”

Adam blushed. “Y…yes.”

Second Adam smiled. “You two….?”

He frowned. “Are you asking me if we had sex?”

“Obviously, Addie. I need something to focus on and your sex life is…”

Adam didn’t let him finish because he heard, “Star,” and looked up with a cry running to Nigel who hugged him tight. He nuzzled his neck and purred while Nigel kissed his cheek.

“Oh Darling, you’re shaking.”

“Nigel….I…..”

“Shh, c’mon now. Let’s sit, yeah?”

Adam nodded and they walked away from the others to sit while he just clutched at Nigel’s side. “Tell me everything.”

So he did.

Nigel listened, and offered the support he needed while then distracting him away from everything by asking about solar eclipses out of the blue. Adam laid his head on Nigel's shoulder and whispered in his ear everything he knew, and Nigel just held his hand, finger brushing Adam's ring the entire time.

Everything was better with Nigel here.

He turned to see Second Adam watching them with a huge smile on his face and Adam blushed. "Star?"

"Adam is staring at us."

Nigel looked over. "Ah," he said, "Is that…someone brought hamburgers?"

"Duncan," he said, scenting Nigel's cheek, "Grigg's alpha."

"I could've brought hamburgers," Nigel mumbled, "I would've gotten them at a better place than Burger Shack too. Fucking cheapskate."

Adam frowned as he smelled Nigel's upset scent. "Nigel?"

He growled and started to rub Adam's ring faster. "I could've brought *ribs* , or….what's more expensive than ribs?"

"Lobster?"

"That," he growled, "What makes him so special?"

Adam turned Nigel's cheek. "Are you jealous?"

Nigel scoffed. "Jealous? Of hamburgers?"

Adam smiled as his heart skipped a beat. "I don't like hamburgers much," he said, squeezing Nigel's hand, "What do I like, Nigel?"

Nigel smiled. "Macaroni and cheese and….chicken."

"Yes," he purred, touching his cheek, "So I don't care about Duncan's hamburgers."

Nigel leaned in to kiss him softly. "Good."

"Nigel…."

"I'll go get you some macaroni, Star, if you want?"

"No, I….please don't leave."

Nigel pulled him in for a hug and he clutched him tightly. "I….I won't, Adam. I….I'm not going anywhere without you."

Adam closed his eyes.

I'm not going anywhere without you.

Nigel's words echoed in his head and he felt tears fall down his cheeks.

"Alpha."

Nigel was here.

And he wasn't going anywhere.

That's all he needed to hear.

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